

Integral Education and Politics of Student Movements; An Exigency of JP's Nation Building Process

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Abstract

India has been regularly hitting newspaper headlines for the changing trajectory of politics. There was an inordinate bedlam in India regarding the changing discourse of nationalism among youth. Youth overcharged with impulsive ideas, reckless behaviour, dynamism and fearlessness get easily aroused by rattling talks of political leaders. It is to be accepted as a dogma that students get mobilized easily and can play commendable role in overthrowing the government all over the world. India is a country having largest youth population as compared to the other countries of the world, so Indian political history is replete with such examples of youth and student movements from pre independence period till date. The emergence of the plethora of political activities of youth can be traced back to the start of the movement headed by Jayaprakash Narayan. This paper makes an effort to highlight some of the significant Student Movements in India with special reference to JP Movement of 1974. This paper also tries to probe into several questions as to what was the moral impact of such movement on the Indian society? How much student's future prospects were affected by involvement in such movements? What was the role of educational institutions in promoting such movement? The most important of all, is it desirable or moral in contemporary era? As we all know that youth and students can change the world, Thus JP appeared as a titanic force galvanizing and solidifying the energies of the youth for India's second political freedom and economic reconstruction. Further portraying JP as a part leader has instigated new discussion on educational revolution brought about by JP. Lastly, this paper has been an attempt to address youth especially students and educational institutions as fundamental units of nation, giving shape to the nation building process.

Keywords: youth, student movements, history, educational institutions, integration, national identity.

Introduction

Our country has produced plenty of personalities who have contributed a lot in almost every sphere of life. Among the notable stars of the social political galaxy of Indian planet, JP stands on a pedestal quite different from others for a variety of reasons. Without joining the electoral fray, the life of Jayprakash Narayan stressed over seventy seven years, is a story of total dedication and service to the cause of common man of India. He dedicated his whole life for the amelioration of his own motherland. His compassionate heart, humanist outlook yearned to see mankind in the state of peace, happiness and brotherhood. Justice equality and freedom were the beaconing lights of his life which remained so till his death for the cause of social reconstruction. He was an ardent supporter of democratic principles for which he never compromised. Having all the sobriquets of a person regarded as people's hero, a leader unmatched in independent India, JP was an Indian independence activist, a theorist, a political leader, a Marxist turned socialist Gandhian; Jayaprakash Narayan was Loknayak; one of the greatest political thinkers that India produced in the 20th century. JP movement led to a large scale mobilisation of youth in the state, a large chunk of which were students. Process of change is inevitable and is a universal phenomenon, however it is also an undisputed fact that people resist change. So in almost all cases ideological revolt stems to bring about change which essentially emanates from the feeling of dissatisfaction. Youth overcharged with impulsive ideas, reckless behaviour, dynamism and fearlessness get easily aroused by rattling talks of political leaders. It is to be accepted as a dogma that students get mobilized easily and can play a commendable role in overthrowing the government all over the world. India is a country having largest youth population as compared to the other countries of the world. So, Indian political history is replete with such examples of youth and student movements from pre-independence period till date. To understand students movement under the helm of Jayprakash Narayan we need to explore the term in particular.

Ideology of Student Movements

Students as term suggests are basically learners and followers of school, college and university curriculum, but history is a testimony to the fact that they have played a vital role in the political setup and political upheaval. Student activism at the university level is nearly as old as the university itself. This is a global phenomenon and has always been the topic of deliberation, debate and at times argument. Ross classifies student's protest into five types.

The first and foremost being 'political protests', second being 'economic protests', thirdly we come across 'moral protests', 'educational protest' take the fourth place, and lastly

we see 'protests for fun' taking the fifth place. The last mention protest diminishes the fair name of the entire student community. According to some scholars, student's unrest is a symptom of negative identity (Reddy,1969; Danke 1971a). According to Philip Albatch (1968a) Student's movement are generated by an emotional feeling of an associated with intergenerational conflict. Indian youth have not shaken of caste, family, regional or religious identities by becoming students. (Guestfield,1970) Many studies report that growing rate of unemployment aggravate the situation. But nevertheless, there are some student's revolution which picked up greater political issues. In 1960, West Bengal saw a political upheaval launched by students. In 1973, Gujarat, in 1974 Bihar, in 1987 Telangana, in 1990 Mandal commission and JNU agitation in 2016 are some of the examples in which one thing was found that all political parties and front organisations mobilized the students to emerge as a social pressure groups and such groups demanded for larger political agenda related to a nation and integration forcefully and aggressively. Sometimes to such an extent that ethics and rationality of the movement was lost. Some of them even aspired to become political leaders which was not to be encouraged at that age. Enthusiasm and sagacity are both important for a struggle which cannot succeed without either. (Narayan,2013;118).

Global Paradigm of Student Movements

Some of the significant student's movement needs to be dealt with other university level to assess its wide impact on student's nature and future all over the world. Students in Paris and Bologna staged collective actions as early as the 13th century chiefly over town and gown issues. (Brown, 2013: 9-10). Students protest over greater political issue concerning all have a long pedigree. In Latin America student activism dates back to 19th century. For much of the 20th century Students Union remained active in Australia. The student Wings always have been proactive violence and impulsive. If you cite the glaring case of Chile, we find that students agitated against the prevalent system of education and demanded a new framework of education in the country. In Chinese Civil War, students played an instrumental role in bringing communist victory in the country against the American hegemony. Student dominated youth movement also played a central role in the Colour revolutions (Tina,2011:270-271). It is often said that in France, the public debates are often influenced by the student's perspective. Talking about the Parliamentary Democracy in UK, the students have remained always champions of political activism. In United States, student activism is often understood as a form of youth activism. Here students addressed wide range of issues. Students formed social movements that moved them from resistance to liberation (Flacks,1988:17). The year of 1966 and 70s saw several waves of student's movement in the American society which was again witnessed in 1990s. If we assess the major campaigns and review their success rate, we can easily generalize that youth have enough potential to reshape the

society and polity in an egalitarian form. Such movements will always be remembered by the new generation as a lighthouse for future course of action. Tiananmen Square massacre is famous for students protest which took place in 1989 exhibited the invincible spirit of youth and gave a global message loud and clear that the power of student or youth movement cannot be contained by oppressive, brutal measures. Thus, students action inspires youth for many more years to come. Hong Kong umbrella process of 2014 did not result in any electoral reforms but definitely it was considered as a wake up call to Hongkong and global order. There are many more such incidents which establishes students role in the formation and reformation movement. When students are driven by a constant contradiction between texts learnt and contexts lived, they feel frustrated and rebellious. The dichotomy between the values professed in the classrooms and reality of the community jolt them from within and they get ready to fight a battle against corruption and inefficiency of the government. We may call it student's revolt (sepoy mutiny) or student's liberation movement (first war of independence). So it is the perspective which decides the nature of any student movement. It is true that the students are impulsive and therefore when their prayers fail upon the deaf ears of the system they become agitated and pick up violent methods which are morally wrong but may be politically correct and pragmatic. The events mentioned above affirms the fact that students wage a struggle easily and most of the times fail to adhere to the norms of decency. They indulge in such activities which are not desirable. It is crucial therefore to be extra careful in involving students in any movement.

Changing Dynamics and Politics of Student Movements in the Indian History

Youth movement in India can be classified into following categories: (i) Anti Colonial (ii) Democratic Reforms (iii) Social Reforms (iv) Institutional Reforms (v) Questioning fundamental values and experimenting with alternative ways. All the categories faced many ups and downs but it has always drawn the attention of makers of India. Nation repose their faith and trust in youth. Let the youth prove worthy of the trust (Chandra, 1989: 267) Student movements have more than 150 years of history. In 1848 Dadabhai Naoroji founded 'the students scientific and historic society' as a forum for discussion. In this period the part of the struggle, students questioned education system itself. The first student strike happened at King Edward Medical College, Lahore, regarding academic discrimination between the English people and Indians. The strike was a complete success. As a part of the freedom struggle there were so many students movements which emerged and engaged themselves in their struggle for the independence of a nation. Organised students movement in India is eighty years old as its origin dates back to 1936 when a permanent all India students federation was mooted to "prepare the students for citizenship in order to take their due share for complete National freedom". Since then, the students of India have been "arousing their

social, political and economic consciousness" (MapsofIndia.com). They refused to work only within the realm of issues facing the students but went ahead and participated in steering the ship of the government. Student movements in India have always shown concern for wider social political issues. On 20th December 1973, students of LD College of Engineering, Ahmedabad went on strike in protest against a 20% hike in hostel food fees. The same type of strike was also organised on 3rd January 1974 at Gujarat University which resulted in clashes between police and students which promoted student agitation across Gujarat and indefinite strike started on 7th January in educational institutions. Their demands were related to food and education. Protestors demanded Chimanbhai Patel's resignation and due to the pressure of the protest Indira Gandhi asked Chinambhai Patel to resign. Nav Nirman Yuva Samiti demanded fresh elections and opposition party supported this. Influenced by this, Jayaprakash Narayan visited Gujarat on 11th February 1974. By that time Bihar Movement had already started, but however the agitation helped JP to channelise his programme of action. (Shah,2007 "Pulse of the People", 28th December, India Today)

JP's Perspective of Student Movements

Here words of JayPrakash Narayan quoted " the education that the students are receiving in the course of this movement is itself very valuable, they have left the schools and colleges but the school of life lies ahead of them. The later is more important and they are getting a much better education from that of a school. We will teach them all those things they could never have learnt at their colleges, for example, since the boys are fighting corruption they will find out what forms it takes its causes and its cure. They will study the writings of the specialists who have made a study of the problem to obtain thorough grasp of the subject". He suggested further "to draw a plan to establish an open university for educating the students who have joined the movement. These two plus experience they will get out of the movement will help them to complete their education". (Narayan, Total Revolution:38)

JP claimed that students movement will remain a peaceful agitation, students will struggle with patience and peacefully against hardships, sufferings, injustice, oppression and exploitation. But if such peaceful struggle will be combated with high handedness then sporadic and aimless violence can spread. He was himself apprehensive of the growth of violence in his own movement or was he setting an alarm for the authoritative government? He unlike Gandhi, did not abjure violence fully but accepted it as a last resort. In case of urgency and anarchy, he said non-violence must become swift otherwise violence will take over non violence and non violence will be engulfed by flood of violence. (Narayan, Total Revolution:85)

He talked of non violence movement, but students broke the norms ruthlessly and JP was not able to control the situation, he expressed his helplessness but held government being responsible for the emotional outburst of the youth. Innocent people were killed and many others seriously injured. JP initially professed the ideas of marxism and believed in the violent reconstruction of the society. However later he became Gandhian in his socialist perspective opting for peaceful methods but unlike Gandhi he never contempt violence. According to him violence should be avoided, but if it is necessary then it can be used for social welfare. JP was a thinker whose ideas kept on evolving not out of expediency but out of conviction (Pandey,2016:182)

In December 1972, he called upon the youth of India to spreadhead a movement to save democracy from being into shambles. He said "Will our youth continue to look on idly at the strangulation of the democratic process? Surely there can't be a more important issue which should move the youth to action (Ugraha,2001:3). On 18th May 1973, JP observed "Like millions of those who had fought and suffered for the country's freedom, I too had a golden vision of independent India Today when I compare the reality with that vision I am filled with sadness and when I ponder over the future, my heart sinks (Prison Diary, Bombay 3). On 5th June 1974, JP declared that the struggle was not going to be limited to securing the demands of the students alone including the demands for the resignation of the ministry and dissolution of assembly in Bihar but would aim higher at bringing about a Total Revolution or Sampoorana Kranti (Narayan, 1992: 20 115-5 to 20). JP felt it was the need of the hour to solve the urgent problems of the country and usher in a new society based on Gandhian principles from which the country has totally deviated. JP was even more worried by the precipitious fall in the moral standards of our public life (Prasad,1985:235). He claimed that it was a similar situation as of 1920 and 1942 Gandhian Movement.

The Making of National Leaders; Mobilization of Youth

JP movement led to large scale mobilization of youth in the state a large chunk of which were students. Students were charged with the spirit of patriotism and were prepared to sacrifice their life for their motherhood. JP movement was also a freedom movement from the enemy's shackles in the form of corruption, crime, unemployment, abject poverty or in nutshell failure of the government. Students eagerly accepted the life of hardship and danger for high ideals. Students were hope of the nation and therefore they came forward to spreadhead the movement. Students were compared with the soldiers and warriors and became the vanguard. Victory of this movement led to growth of a vibrant student politics culture in Bihar. Many prominent leaders of centre and state today are the product of this movement. Ravi Shankar Prasad (Law minister), Ashwini

Kumar Choubey (Health Minister of the state), Sushil Kumar Modi, Ram Vilas Paswan, Nitish Kumar Laloo Yadav etc. Thus JP gave Bihar yet another reason for its political prosperity by educated, aware, vibrant and warm-blooded youth who are the real architect of the society, became politically aware and empowered, thus ensuring enough resources for the construction of a sound and prosperous society. Thus JP emerged as a dauntless heroic leader who acted as a path builder of leaders for the coming decades who took their baby steps under the helm of JP.

JP's Education Revolution; views on Education

JP was fully convinced that good education institutions in India could be established if sufficient power was obtained by a socialist party. He was in support of educating children and youth on a functional basis, organising cooperatives, strengthening the producing masses with the knowledge and overpowering role of the state in the economic life of the country. He partly took the decision to fight against all types of exploitation also tried to eradicate discrimination in educational sector. To fight against the profit extracting motive of the capitalist educational system in the country, he worked to enforce the distribution of national wealth equally among the people of India and so for education. His ideology was to work for the welfare of all the people of the country irrespective of caste, creed, religion and gender. He inferred that abolition of capitalism was a positive and mandatory move towards socialism. He also advocated high quality education for poor and needy. According to him, under socialism there is no exploitation of man by man, no injustice and oppression, no insecurity and an equitable distribution of wealth, opportunities and services like education and health. JP wanted students to be courageous, farsighted and unselfish to the core. How far is it feasible is not above doubt. The recent developments do not present encouraging picture in India. Students must however exhibit high level of patience, understanding and maturity. At the same time they should mark their limit to bear, adopt legitimate protests and give fruitful outlet. Youth must awaken to this idea. Movement must have a larger purpose- welfare of all, not disintegration of nation at any cost, at any level, and with any pronounced ideology or vested interest of the leader or the followers.

Role of Educational institutions in Nation Building Process

Education is a powerful instrument of social change and human progress of any nation. It is also a powerful tool to cultivate nationalist values in an individual. Therefore in the nation building process, all educational institutes have greater responsibility to impart historical learning and cultivation of patriotic values through education. Japan and Israel

are the best examples in support of this argument. The main function of education is to enrich the citizen's character, historical knowledge and occupational skills.

As students in educational institutions come with stars in their eyes and dreams about the future that they are going to have, it is essential that they know our past, the sacrifices made by the thousands of martyrs who have made this dream possible. It is a very common feeling among us that after seventy two years of independence, the spirit of patriotism in India has lost its essence and the young generation not even knows the struggles of Indian freedom fighters. What is the purpose of study? To gain knowledge. Knowledge is gained to reshape the society and to make it a better place to live in. Just having successful career should not be the object of students. Therefore study and struggle go hand in hand. Students and soldiers are two sides of the same coin. The absence of one will make another meaningless. Youth and students can change the world. We can pin our hope on them. To save our land and protect our cultural heritage, it is very important to be patriotic and not rigid nationalist. Education to all communities including tribes, dalits and religious minorities can help in nation building process. Education institutions must not only play a political role but it should also be an ideal place for creating strong character of citizens to serve the nation and further the world.

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