Patriotism Versus Nationalism: Tagore’s Critique of Nationalism

Indian Political Thought Assignment

Question

Why did Tagore criticized nationalism? And in the context of Tagore’s Critique of Nationalism would there be any difference in Patriotism and Nationalism.

Answer:

The multifaceted genius of Tagore ended the last day of the 19th century by writing down the poem The Sunset of the Century – The notion of nationalism was boldly criticized in the poem. Naturally introduced to a time of expanding pressure among the superpower of Europe, and the consistently developing nationalist movement in India, Tagore trying to straightforwardly assault the institution of the nation sate ?

The last sun of the century sets amidst the blood red clouds of the West and the whirlwind of hatred.

The naked passion of selflove of Nations, in its drunken delirium of greed is dancing to the clash of steel and the howling verses of vengeance.

The hungry self of the Nation shall burst in a violence of fury from its own shameless feeding.

For it has made the world its food,

And licking it, crunching it, and swallowing it in big morsels, it swells and swells

Till in the midst of its unholy feast descends the sudden heaven piercing its heart of grossness(1). ?

An antinationalization tendency is extremely clear from these words. The notion of nationalism being the main foundation explanation for war aggression and death stays at the centre of Tagore’s teachings(2). Yet, he is referred to as the greatest nationalist figure of the Bengali renaissance. For sure, Tagore’s most prominent legacy lies within the undeniable fact that three nation states of the planet today to be specific, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, owe their national anthems to this antinationalitarian genius. This represents a genuine problem in the investigation of Tagore's thoughts on nation and nationalism. In an offer to successfully comprehend and explain this problem, it must be remembered that Tagore was hostile towards the concept of nationalism in its military or aggressive sense. What could be genuinely be brought up as hyper-nationalism. He was a passionate devotee of an interactive world, a universe of dialogue among development and social orders. The standard of all-inclusiveness would be the base of such a word where countries would not be guided exclusively by selflove

and self-gratification, yet be a piece of a higher illuminated network of social order. Tagore likewise imagined an inter civilizational collusion-a blend of the east and west and an advantageous interaction of all world civilisation in the bigger setting.

To understand why did Tagore criticized nationalism we have to look how he looked at nationalism. Tagore's portrait of nationalism consequently spills out of his portrayal of the establishment of nation-state. Tagore was of the sentiment that patriotism is just an organization of governmental issues and business, that brings harvests of wealth by spreading arms of covetousness, childishness, force and flourishing. nationalism, as indicated by Tagore, isn't a unconstrained self-expression of man as social being, the place human connections are normally regulated, so that men can create standards of life in participation with each other, but instead a political and business association of a gathering of individuals, in which they assemble to amplify their benefit, progress and force. It is the composed self-interest of a people, where it is least human and least profound. Tagore considered nationalism to be a repetitive risk to mankind, in light of the fact that with its penchant for the material and the balanced, it stomped on over the human soul, human ethical quality and human feeling, obscuring his human side under the shadow of heartless association(3). Tagore saw his greatest case of the distorted Nation in the British colonialism in India. The British expansionism discovered its ethical defense on the grounds of nationalism. The colonizers advocated their provincial experiences and adventures as the white man's weight to spread human advancement to the remainder of the world. Anyway, the creating nations were just transformed into 'chasing justification's for simple self-interests of the colonizing country. Tagore opines that all the issues in frontier India as established in one basic certainty that is the dynamic being, the Nation [the English nation] is administering India(4). His first stark criticism and rejection of the radical Swadeshi nationalist that lectured „boycott of remote goods? and thus was otherwise called the Boycott Movement turned out in the article called “Sadupay” ('The Right Means'-1908). He criticized there in clear terms the fixation of the leaders who would not consider the ground real factors of the country destitute individuals both Hindu and Muslim and never winced from receiving any vicious intends to compel 'swadeshi' down their throats. Such was the position taken by Tagore, the follower of Indian history and culture(8). Tagore’s involvement in the nationalism can be said to have two distinct phases of development. The primary stage was overwhelmed by a nationalist feeling, a phase that continuously finished in what is referred to in history as the period of Swadeshi movement. The second stage can be defined as the post Swadeshi one when he became basic and revisionary of what had occurred for the sake of his increasing interest in the issues of the nation. It can be further elaborated as in 1905, the Swadeshi development began against the British approach of apportioning Bengal, Tagore was strongly engaged with the dissent against the Raj- began giving talks and composing patriotic songs. In any case, before long, Tagore saw the development turning savage with the nationalist fomenting against honest laborers, who were not interested in their motivation, and particularly the Muslims who were supportive of the segment for partition for practical as well as political reasons (the segment gave the Muslims of East Bengal another capital in Dhaka). Tagore thought that it was hard to acknowledge the madness of the nationalist in their consuming of every single remote great as a characteristic of noncooperation, in spite of the fact that it was harming the poor in Bengal who discovered custom made items more costly than foreign goods(7)..

Tagore was against the idea of the nation; he was considerably more furiously restricted to India joining the drive of nationalism, as he accepted this would bargain India's history and way of life as a culture and bring it under the shadow of the West. He cautioned: 'We, in India, must make up our mind that we can't obtain others' history and that on the off chance that we smother our

own we are ending it all. At the point when you obtain things that don't have a place with your life, they just serve to squash your life. I accept that it does India a whole lot of nothing to contend with Western human advancement in its own field. India is no hobo of the West.'(5)Tagore accepted that extreme nationalism makes one nonsensical and obsessive, oblivious in regards to the faculties of truth and equity, make individuals willing to both slaughter and pass on for it, sustain a rationale of 'lunacy' and war, rather than a pattern of opportunity and harmony. He spurned it as ' a cruel epidemic of evil sweeping over the human world of the present age and eating into its moral fiber"(6). As Arunita Samaddar has properly said nationalism, as indicated by Tagore, isn't 'an unconstrained self-articulation of man as social being,' the place human connections are normally controlled, 'so men can create thoughts of life in cooperation with each other the composed personal responsibility of a people, where it is least human and least otherworldly'. Tagore considered nationalism a repetitive risk to mankind, in light of the fact that, with its fondness for the material and the reasonable, it stomped on over the human soul and human feeling; it upset man's ethical parity, 'darkening his human side under the shadow of soul-less association.' Quayum expresses 'Tagore raised doubt about both the developed part of patriotism, which smothered the natural and instinctual characteristics of the human individual and its over emphasis on the business and political perspectives, to the detriment of man's good and profound characteristics. Both of these impediments diminished patriotism to a fragmented, solid and unipolar belief system - basically lacking for people given to a characteristic variety and appearing contraries, that should have been brought together and integrated, through a procedure of heartfelt arrangement and striking of a hub line between contrary energies, to make the entire and healthy individual.

Although in the context of Tagore's criticism towards nationalism the difference between nationalism and patriotism and not clear but there are certain differences like In his 'Home and the World', Nikhil, Tagore's alter ego in the novel, who is patriotic however wouldn't put the country above truth and still, concise says: 'I am willing to serve my country, but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than country. To worship my country as a god is to bring curse upon it.' However, Nikhil's companion, Sandip, a charming yet nationalist, to whom any activity for the sake of the country is correct: 'country's needs must be made into a god, and one must set aside conscience by putting the country in its place'. With the unfurling of the story, we see Sandip getting upset with common laborers who neglected to join the battle, particularly the Muslim traders who saw little benefit in selling sweeping swadeshi things. Sandip, truth be told, brought forth a ploy to consume the exchanging stocks and genuinely assaulted them. Quayam wonderfully figures, 'Bimala has to acknowledge the connection between Sandip's rousing nationalistic sentiments and his sectarian - and ultimately violent actions. Nikhil endeavors to support the people in question, taking a chance with his life incorporate the finish of Bimala's political sentiment with Nikhil's demise(9).Discussions of both patriotism and nationalism are often marred by lack of clarity due to the failure to distinguish the two. Many authors use the two terms interchangeably but they are different as in the 19th century, Lord Acton contrasted "nationality" and patriotism as affection and instinct vs. a moral relation. Nationality is "our connection with the race" that is "merely natural or physical," while patriotism is the awareness of our moral duties to the political community(10). The differences laid by George Orwell contrasted the two in terms of aggressive vs. defensive attitudes. Nationalism is about power: its adherent wants to acquire as much power and prestige as possible for his nation, in which he submerges his individuality. While nationalism is accordingly aggressive, patriotism is defensive: it is a devotion to a particular place and a way of life one thinks best, but has no wish to impose on others(11). his way of distinguishing the two attitudes comes close to an approach popular among politicians and widespread in everyday discourse that indicates a double standard of the

form “us vs. them.” Country and nation are first run together, and then patriotism and nationalism are distinguished in terms of the strength of the love and special concern one feels for it, the degree of one’s identification with it. When these are exhibited in a reasonable degree and without ill thoughts about others and hostile actions towards them, that is patriotism; when they become unbridled and cause one to think ill of others and act badly towards them, that is nationalism. Conveniently enough, it usually turns out that we are patriots, while they are nationalists(11).

Tagore, the visionary that he was, understood the flipside of making god of the country when feelings and assumptions for the nation were running wild. He watched and scrutinized the components of Hindu nationalism inside the nationalist development when it was making its head route in Bengal. Or maybe forward and increasingly far-seeing for his age, he turned into a controversial and a misunderstood figure. Today, however, a considerable lot of the prior misguided judgments about him have cleared to reestablish his picture as an advanced and brave scholar. Indeed, it is just since the complexities and significance of his thoughts have been completely seen. Tagore, as well, for an incredible duration effectively scrutinized colonization. He has composed endless songs for the nation and had surrendered his knighthood in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Be that as it may, he did this in his own specific manner and violence was something which he could not support. Nonetheless, the last piece of his life was spent in extraordinary difficulty, for neither might he be able to overlook the procedure of decolonization nor would he be able to acknowledge it completely. What hurt him more was the way that his own countrymen followed the West in teaching forcefulness and magnification rather assimilate India's own social qualities.