CHAPTER 4

DECODING THE LYRICS OF BANGLA BANDS
Chapter 4

4.1 Introduction

This chapter intends to bring out the image of the contemporary Bengali urban youth from the lyrics of the Bangla Bands. Band music is a unique form of cultural representation and like any 'art' form it represents contemporary urban culture with all its heterogeneities and ambiguities. Like any popular music Bangla Bands are found to be very popular among young people. They constitute not only its audience but also its performers (Ganguly, 2002). It can therefore be taken to be an important medium of understanding 'youth culture', especially, urban youth culture. Young people are idealistic, romantic, and always full of energy to create something new. At times they suffer from acute alienation and consequent sense of a passive resignation. But this negativity usually does not persist for long. They become critical and even think and act positively for the sake of social reconstruction. In this chapter I have tried to trace these contradictions and ambivalences of contemporary Bengali youth as portrayed by the songs of Bangla Bands. This chapter intends to focus on the composite mind-set of the youth developed as a consequence of the interface between i) the global forces and the local indigenous culture (Appadurai, 2008); and ii) the interpenetration between the tradition and modernity. This interface has found expression in the way they perceive and project themselves, their critical attitude to their 'others' and also in their idealistic and romantic compositions. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the dimensions of youth culture focused here do not claim to be an exhaustive one as their image has been portrayed only on the basis of the analysis of the lyrics of some hundred and eighty popular songs from bands like Mohiner Ghoraguli (Mohin's Horses), Cactus, Fossils, Chandrabindoo (the last letter in the Bengali alphabet), Bhoomi (Ground), Miles and Shohor (City). The songs had been selected at random and their contents were analyzed so as to reveal a striking pattern.
4.2 Bengali youth's encounter with the Western values

This section analyses how far the contemporary Bengali youth, like their counterparts in any third world country, adapts, comes to terms with or reacts to the irresistible pressure of globalization and capitalistic values. The following songs depict the youth as possessing a calculative, instrumental, opportunistic frame of mind typical of a market oriented bourgeois society. A song (Appendix I) by Miles from the album Best of Miles (Asha audio 1998) shows the total acceptance of the bourgeois norms and values on the part of Bengali youth, who gets frustrated due to his inability to fulfill the self-expectation to be a 'sensation'.

'Frustration' ami hotey chai 'sensation'
Jibon er 'expectation' gulo sab baki roye jay

('Frustration' results from the inability to be a 'sensation'/ Life's 'expectations' remain unfulfilled)

Here 'sensation' is significant because it signifies an image of the contemporary youth whose aim in life is to get noticed by others. At present there is an emphasis as well as a social pressure on the youth to stand apart from the rest and to be always under the focus of limelight. And this is possible only if an individual attains success in material terms. The same has also been portrayed in the song (Appendix II) by Mohiner Ghoraguli from Abar Bochhor Kuri Pore (Again after Twenty Years, Asha audio 1999)

….amar mahan habar sadh jagey
mahan hote parine
tobu ami sadh ahlad chharine……

( I wish to be 'great' / Cannot become 'great' / Still I can not do away with desires.)

In the above lines the use of the word 'mahan' (great), which signifies a level of
transcendence beyond the ordinary, is very interesting. According to the traditional Indian values the ultimate aim in a person's life is to attain spiritual salvation. This same yearning for transcendence has been echoed in the voices of the contemporary youth but with definite modifications. He confesses his inability to resist his worldly desires and there is an implicit repentance for it. This emphasis on fulfillment of individual needs and wants reflects a flavour of the western value system to their indigenous life-goals.

The song *Ghare Pherar Gaan* (Song of Returning Home) (Appendix III) by *Mohiner Ghoraguli* from the above mentioned album depicts their relentless endeavour to attain success in life.

.....ami tai ekhono klantiheen, cholechhi ratri din....

.....ekhono samney poth hata baki, chaileo dite parbe na phanki.....

(...I venture tirelessly day and night /...there still remains a long way to cover, there is no stopping even if you want to)

In today's society 'stopping' or 'wearing out' from work indicates stagnation, immobility and most importantly failure. The economic principles of capitalism emphasize on constant competition. Attaining victory in this relentless competition is a must because failure would implicate doom and obliteration. Due to this apprehension of failure, the young generation works untiringly. Work is a 'calling' to them and to stop work indicates 'defeat', to be felt hard because of huge monetary loss. But ironically in spite of working non stop, there still remains much to be achieved. Their ambition is never fulfilled because it has no limitation. The youth know that they have to achieve material success but the index of success is not well defined. Hence there is no scope for 'leisure' or 'recreation'. In traditional Indian living emphasis was given on leisure in order to cultivate higher spiritual pursuits. Today, with the inroads of capitalist market economy the youth cannot afford to spend time on nurturing these qualities. Such a similar attitude on the part of the youth is also
highlighted in a song (Appendix IV) by *Chandrabindoo* from the album *Aar Janina* or *Don't Know Further* (T-series, 1997)

...besh korboi ami porboi Competition Success

( ...I would definitely read 'Competition success')

The reference to 'Competition Success' again emphasizes meritocracy \(^1\). In the song the youth justifies his action forcefully, showing thereby their ambivalence. In defence of their action, which surely marks a shift from indigenous way of living, they adopt an arrogant attitude.

In addition to being instrumentalist in their orientation, the contemporary youth know that they also have to be opportunist in order to achieve and maintain material success. The element of opportunism has been captured by the following song by *Mohiner Ghoraguli* (Appendix II) from *Abar Bochhor Kuri Pore* (1999)

Ami dandikey roi na ami baam dikey roi na

Ami duidikey tei roi paran jalanjali dia re

(I am neither a rightist nor a leftist / I am both, suppressing my conscience)

Their opportunism gets revealed when they prefer to take a politically correct stand, to the extent of suppressing their conscience. A careful analysis of all the above songs would reveal the repeated use of the word 'ami' that is, individualized self (ami hote chai sensation, ami sadh ahlad chharine, ami tai.... Cholechhi ratri din, ami porboi competition success and ami dandike roi na.....etc.). In traditional India individual existed for the good of the community. But under the impact of western individualism, the contemporary young generation seems to be too much pre-occupied with their individual selves. The young generations of today are ever ready to evaluate themselves in the capitalist market. They have lots of expectations from life (as has been stated already), meaning thereby material expectations. This mentality of the
youth has been reflected in the song *Dishehara je mor mon* (My mind is puzzled, Appendix V) in the album *Maya* (Illusion) by *Moheener Ghoraguli* (Asha audio 1998). The youth admits that he/she does not know what is the limit to his/her desires and by how much money can he/she buy those wants and desires. There is a paradox in the song because it is the same youth who envies one of his/her friends who is a vagabond and leads a carefree life, not bothering about the price of his/her self. These dual and opposite feelings in the youth show that there are ambiguities in them. There is always a conflict of feelings and emotions going on in the young minds about their destination in life. Deep within their heart the contemporary youth perhaps desire freedom from the shackles of stress and competition in life but is uncertain of his/her decision to let go of a life which centers around success, career and ambitions. The youth is however positive that one day they will come to know of their destination in life.

Attainment of material success of the youth comes at a price and the price is loneliness. Today's youth are very lonely. In the willingness to succeed and be materially successful, the young generation is always engaged into competition with others and tries to surpass others. As a result they have no companions or friends. All are competitors. The loneliness is at times disturbing to the youth. This has been reflected in the songs of the bangla bands. In the song *Amra bhishon eka* (We are very lonely) by *Cactus* in the album of the same name (Saregama India Limited, 1999) the pain and disdain of the youth resulting from loneliness have been portrayed. The song also locates the root of this loneliness in the industrial revolution (Appendix VI). The following line portrays this.

*Ei shipa biplauber samay....*

*Amra bhishon eka*

*(During the industrial revolution we are very lonely)*
Here by 'shilpa biplab' (industrial revolution) the youth probably mean the employment generated as a result of the springing up of the Information and Communication Technology industry in the country during the decade of nineties and after (Upadhyay 2011). The youth justify the presence of this loneliness in the contemporary society and are even ready to accept it for the sake of technological progress. Staying lonely and being to oneself has become a habit for the urban youth. This has been reflected in the song *Ekla ghor* (Solitary room) by the band Fossils in their album of the same name (Asha audio 2001). In the song (Appendix VII) the youth justifies his/her loneliness and likes to stay lonely. The song portrays the youth's condition of confinement within a room. The reference to the solitary room is significant in the song because room indicates atomized and individualized existence of the contemporary youth in the present society. The western value system has taught us to give primary importance to our individualized selves. In the song it has been hinted that the youth had a companion who had parted ways with the former but he/she refuses to lament over it overtly. In his/her innermost self the loss of a friend haunts the youth but he/she does not want to show it. Rejection of one's true self and hiding the emotion are traits of the contemporary everyday living.

4.3 Critical temperament among the youth

The dimensions of instrumentality, the desire to be a sensation or to transcend the ordinary as well as opportunism in youth are not unchallenged. Instead of being a passive entity and completely resigning to the western or the Indian value system, the youth have questioned them. Criticality therefore, would mean the ability of the youth to make an in-depth analysis of the existing social order, critique it and also a willingness to change it. Youth can act as a 'revolutionary force and initiate any process of social change (Oommen, 1990).
The analysis of the Bangla Band songs reveals a 'sensitive' and 'rebellious' image of the contemporary youth who are ever ready to defy the entrenched social system. The songs reveal how the youth are not only aware of the existing 'social inequalities' but given a chance they would like to 'overthrow' the hegemonic structures and come out of the monotonous routine existence of every day life. That the youth critique the sense of detachment of the privileged section from the ground reality of the common masses has been well portrayed in the song (Appendix VIII) by Mohiner Ghoraguli from the album Abar Bochhor Kuri Pore

Akashey chharano megher kachha kachhi dekha jay tomader bari....

Ei barir nei thikana....

(Your house is in the sky near the scattered clouds.... / This house has no address...)

House near the scattered clouds has been used as a metaphor used to mean 'privileged'. 'Privileged' here signifies the 'elite' who are the 'others' to the 'downtrodden' and are completely unaware and detached from the sufferings of the latter. In the above song 'address' signifies 'contact' and through it a metaphor has been drawn emphasizing on how 'unreachable' and 'far away' the elites are from the 'socially disadvantaged' and their sufferings. The rootlessness of such existence of the elite has been critiqued by the youth. The same is also reflected in the song (Appendix IX) Emono Boshontodine (This Spring) by Chandrabindoo from the album Aar Janina where the king addresses his inferior as 'Chakor' meaning 'servant', revealing an extreme feeling of contempt towards the latter. The very use of this word is striking because it reveals not only a difference in the 'status' between the two but also demeans the identity of the person so addressed. Though latent, but there is probably an attempt here to question the existing social injustice. At the same time the 'dependence' on and the 'exploitation' of one group by the other has
been criticized. In both the above songs there is an underlying implication that the youth are distantiating themselves from the privileged section of the society and taking sides with the marginalized. This is a paradox because it is the same youth who have preferred to be politically correct when it came to the issue of attaining material success. A song by Bhoomi from the album Yatra Shuru (Times Music, 2000) also questions the existing stratification system (Appendix X).

\[
\text{dada re tor payer niche pokamakor jay pishe} \\
\text{tui bolish bhtable eto benchey thaka day} \\
\text{.....ami raat jege raat jege roi}
\]

\text{(Big Brother you stifle the small insects with your feet / you say in order to survive one has to stop thinking / ....I spend sleepless nights)}

That the 'powerholders' mercilessly oppress the 'downtrodden' without any feeling of guilt has been portrayed in this song. The mainstream tradition preaches the value of individual success, which includes overlooking the social injustice. But the contemporary youth cannot fully accept or support this doctrine. They feel bad but there is no clue found here that they take up any constructive action to ameliorate the social problem. They feel extremely helpless and confused. The reference to 'sleepless nights' in the above song reveals the feeling of 'embarrassment', shame and anger among the youth on this issue.

The young generation develops a sense of guilt and shame when they see that people are being differentiated on the basis of religion. They question the validity of such difference in our country and show how both the religions are essentially one. The following lines from the song Dharmer Gaan (Song of Religion) by the band Shohor (City) from the album of the same name (Asha audio, 2002) portays this

\[
\text{Gorur shing ache pantharo ache tai}
\]
Dujone gutoguti dujone bhai bhai (Appendix XI)

(Both the cow and the goat have horns/both fight between them at the same time both are like brothers)

Apparently, the song seems to question the harshness meted out to the animals by humans. But underlying this simple message is a deeper understanding and a critique of the existing religious differences in our country. Here the 'cow' and the 'goat' have been used metaphorically to mean the Muslims and the Hindus respectively. The song depicts the similar fate of the people belonging to the two different religions at the hands of the larger political forces. The youth probably try to give a message of awareness to the people belonging to different religions and shows how their differences are banked upon by the political forces in order to maintain their status quo. The song besides giving a deeper message of the futility of religious differences between Hindus and Muslims, also points out the helplessness of the animals at the hands of the humans. The humans poach these animals mercilessly to satiate their own hunger revealing the nature of exploitation of these harmless animals. A similar sentiment has been echoed in one of the songs by the band Chandrabindeo (the last letter in the English alphabet). The song Gadha (Donkey) from the album of the same name (Asha audio 1998) depicts the plight of a donkey, another harmless creature at the hands of humans. The youth criticize the cruel treatment meted out to the animal in the following lines

......Gadhar obostha ki korechen ki korechen pada
Gadha ta ke jol dao more jabe
Shustho hole tobei to chore jabe (Appendix XII)

(What condition have you made of the donkey/Give it some water otherwise it will die/If it is cured you will be able to ride it)

The relevance of the above song needs to be emphasized at two levels. Apparently it narrates the inhuman treatment meted out to the harmless animals
like donkey who can never protest against such injustice. The relation between
man and animal is a hierarchized one where the latter is at times at the receiving
end of the scale. But at a deeper level it can be said that 'donkey' here represents
the class of the people who are the downtrodden and have nots (Karl Marx),
those who work for the elites and the moneyed class of people. In spite of the
hard labour that they put in for the latter, yet they are paid so less in terms of
wage that they and their families remain hungry and weak. Therefore they are
anemic, have pale blank and tiring eyes with no signs of protest. The youth feel
for these people and request the elites to stop such exploitation. They point out
the fact that inspite of such ill treatment from their employer (upper class), the
workers (the downtrodden) still love and respect them. Underlying the song
echoes a typical Marxist explanation of the exploitation of the proletariats at the
hands of the bourgeoisie.

The following song (Appendix XIII) by Mohiner Ghoraguli from the
album Abar Bochhor Kuri Pore (Asha audio 1999), mocks at the elder
generation and all the 'rules' and 'regulations' that they represent.

…….Kintu char ana tei amra khusi amader chaoar cheye anek beshi

Bhalobaste na janle jibon e sholoana e phanki

Hey sholo ana theke jodi sholo ana jaye hisheb ta koshey dekho darao
kothaye

Shunyo shunyo sudhu rashi rashi tomader katha bhebe amra hashi……..

(...But we are happy with four annas which is more than our expectations /If
you donot know how to love, you lose sixteen annas of your life / Subtract
sixteen from sixteen and see where you stand / Infinite zeros in your life
make us laugh at you.)

Here the youth are portrayed as 'nonconformists' because they refuse to lead a
'calculative' life as desired by their 'others'. This 'others' can be parents or any
other authorities. To them the real reason behind the 'contentlessness' of the
'other's' life lies in being unable to be of service to society. The youth want a 'carefree' and 'zestful' life, which will give them an opportunity to 'love' and 'care' for others selflessly. They are satisfied with little since their expectations are limited. In many of the previous songs, discussed above the ambivalence of the youth as to whether to accept the entrenched system or not was evident. But here we find them mocking the entire power structure and rejecting it absolutely. The similar rejection of the existing order is also echoed in the line by Chandrabindoo from the album Daknaam (Nickname, Sony Music 2002) stating

….ekushe ain ami manchhi na manbo na

(I do not/ would not obey the twenty one rules) (Appendix XIV)

In the song Bathroom (Appendix XV) from the album Twaker Jotno Nin or Take Care of your Skin (Asha audio, 1999) by Chandrabindoo, a further instance of the defiance of the authority has been showcased. The song depicts how a young school boy defies the authority of the teacher and the rules of the school when the latter is unable to cater to the needs of the child. The following lines would narrate such an incident

Ami first period e giyechhilam aar third period e jabo abar

Jete dibi na keno didimoni tui bathroom ta ki tor babar?

(I went to the toilet in the first period and want to go again in the third period/Miss why will you not allow me to go to the toilet/Does it belong to your father?)

The narrative of the above song seems to be quite straight and simple and it tries to show how the young student in school critiques the existing unjust practices by the adults. Here in the song the youth take the sides of a young student and probably try to look through his eyes at the duplicity of the adult world and their inability of understanding and identifying the problems of the child. The song justifies the innocent protest of the child in the form of a simple question put to
the teacher. This also shows an outright rejection of the social order by the child. The song also focuses on the issue of abuse on the child in school and shows how the abuse can be mental or emotional apart from being physical. It is these ill treatments at the hands of the authority which urge the child to become a non-conformist by nature and defy the existing rules and practices of the adult world.

_Pakhider Surey Gaan (Singing to the tune of Birds)_ by Mohiner Ghoraguli from the album _Abar Bochhor Kuri Pore_ depicts the reason for which the youth defy the entrenched order.

Ekgheyemitye klanto mon, e je bishomo daye
Keno doshta aar paanch tar e jatakaley pore sokoley beshamaal amra sabai?

(Appendix XVI)

(_Monotony makes mind tired, it is a real burden/ Why do we suffer under the pressure of daily routine of time bound office job?_

The song says that life as a 'routine' has been looked upon by the youth as a 'burden' because it's monotony is tiring and inhibits the 'novelty', 'freshness' and a lease of new 'energy' which are the characteristic features of youth hood. This image of the 'klanto' (tired) youth is quite in contrast to 'klantiheen' (tireless) youth portrayed in a song mentioned above in this chapter. Through the songs of bangla band the youth have rebelled against not only the routine and monotonous existence of every day but have also protested against the political and social realities like war and inflation and the increasing prices of goods. In the song by _Cactus_ from the album _Rajar Raja or The King of Kings_ (Asha audio 2004), the youth have been vocal about the ill effects of war on society and mankind. The expression 'Buddha has laughed!' (Appendix XVII) in the song is to be noted with special significance. This is because _Smiling Buddha_ is the assigned code name of India's first nuclear weapon explosion which took place on May 18, 1974. The device was detonated by the Indian
army in the army base, Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan under the aegis of several key Indian army personnel. In the year 1998 India conducted the second nuclear weapon test at Pokhran in Rajasthan. The song draws reference to these explosions through the expression Buddha has laughed. It is due to the latter explosion that the youth can sense the fact that war between India and Pakistan might be impending and therefore try to figure out the disastrous consequences of the war. Alarmed at the possibility of the war the youth cautions us that the effects of the war would be long term. It would not only worsen the socio-cultural relations of the two neighbouring states but would also adversely affect the future generations to come. Due to the use of harmful weapons during war the coming generations would have a possibility to become either infertile or physically deformed. The war would also likely blow up the religious differences between the people in the country.

Inflation or the increase in prices of goods has also been the subject matter of bangla band songs. For instance the song *Ananda Sen* by *Chandrabinado* from the album *Gadha* (Donkey) (Asha audio 1998) reflects how the society has been affected by the rising prices of living. They cite an instance of Ananda Sen who could probably be the representative of the middle class Bengali who love to read books, eat and travel. The song (Appendix XVIII) reveals the fact that in the year 1972 the three essential commodities of Bengali middle class life had been within reach but with the passage of several years these have become too expensive to be able to be afforded. The Bengali middle class people who are largely dependent on jobs or services have to sacrifice their objects of liking and find ways to substitute these in the present situation which is marked by high rates of economic inflation. The following line from the song would reveal the above situation.

Beche thaka thik jeno pusheya rakha shada hati

(*Sustenance today is like petting a white elephant*)
Here 'white elephant' is symbolic of an elegant and luxurious living. The youth criticize the issue of rising prices of essential commodities in the market but also admits its inevitability through the song.

Though very limited in numbers, yet there are few songs by the bands speaking about the problems of women. A noticeable fact in the songs is that the women have been depicted as victims of social circumstances and are always at the receiving end of the scale. They are rarely, if at all portrayed as the agencies of social construction and change. In the song *Dildariya (Broad heart)* (Appendix XIX) by *Bhoomi* from the album *Yatra Shuru* (Times Music 2000) the story of a boatman's wife has been depicted. The woman waits for her husband to return and appeals to the river to give him back to her. She wants to know the destination of her husband and rushes to the banks of the river time and again in the expectation of seeing him but every time she comes back empty handed. Her wait never seems to come to an end. The message of the song is somewhat similar to the song named *Kamalar Swami (Kamala's Husband)* (Appendix XX) in the album *Rajaraja (King of Kings)* by the band *Cactus* (Asha audio 2004). *Kamala* is a woman whose husband has not returned home for a long time. She waits every day in the station till the last local train leaves with renewed hope and expectation that her husband will return. But every time she faces despair as her husband never returns. Through the song we come to know that Kamala's husband has drowned in the water flooded streets of Kolkata during one monsoon. But Kamala perhaps denies the incident and staunchly believes that somebody must have been able to save her husband. But her husband never returns. Both the songs portray the helplessness of the women without their husbands. It is to note that both women in the above songs come from a low socio-economic position of the society and are representatives of the downtrodden women. Women in this section are doubly disadvantaged at the level of class and gender. Since they are 'women' and that too from the
lower socio-economic levels, they have no power to mobilize the system to find their husbands. They are also helpless at the face of the wrath of nature. Hence both have resigned to their fate weeping and lamenting and waiting. The songs have also portrayed the emotional attachment of the women to their husbands and their loyalty to them. The long wait makes them impatient but their feeling of loyalty and love make them steadfast in their beliefs that their husbands will return one day. The voice of the downtrodden women has also found its expression in the song *Sei Phooler Dol (Those group of flowers)* by the band *Moheener Ghoraguli* in the album *Jhara Samayer Gaan (Songs of Withered times)* (Asha audio 1998). The song (Appendix XXI) sensitively narrates the story of two young village girls one from Bangladesh being a Muslim and the other from India being a Hindu. The commonality that these two girls have is that they both have been lost in the city of Kolkata. Perhaps they have been cheated by their lovers who have sold them in the red light areas and converted them into sex workers. The following lines very aptly present the theme

...se kothay

ei shohorer kono baganey se hoye ache phool

(Where is she?/ Probably she has become a flower in a garden in this city)

Here 'flowers' would indicate the beauty to be enjoyed by someone. What is worth noticeable in this song is that it has treated the woman as a 'category' irrespective of their religion and nation. The two women belong to two religions and nations but transcending all these is their identity of being a 'woman'.

The portrayal of the problems of women in the above songs would reveal the sensitivity of the youth towards their problem. But it is to be noted in this context that it is a partial representation of women and the middle class women and their problems have been absent from theme of the songs. Women have been taken as a homogeneous category irrespective of class, caste, and nation. A
possible explanation of this homogeneous understanding can be rooted in the existing patriarchal set up in which the band members have been trained. Patriarchy teaches the distinction between different sexes as natural and hence women are viewed as situated at the receiving end of the scale always. The band members, though they are educated and urban, have yet not been able to come out of this narrow onesided and gendered explanation. Nevertheless the significance of the protests by the youth through their songs cannot be belittled. Their open defiance of the social order and search for an alternative can be said to be a dimension of rebellion as well as 'romanticism' amongst them.

4.4 Romanticism and idealistic frame of mind

Idealistic romanticism would signify the ability of the youth to 'love' selflessly. This love can be for nature, society or simply a love for someone special. 'Love' has been an important theme which has appeared time and again in the songs of the Bangla Band implying it's presence and importance in youth hood. The songs under focus in this section reveal the presence of the 'contrasting' and sometimes 'contradictory' image of 'love' that can be found among the youth of today. On the one hand their love is characterized by 'depth' and 'intensity', where as on the other, it is more 'frivolous' and 'artificial' as the songs reveal. The song Chand Tara Surjo Nau Tumi (You are not Moon, Stars or Sun) (Appendix XXII) by Miles from the album Best of Miles would help us to comprehend the element of intensity of love among the youth.

Tumi na eley ei prithibi amar harabey apon thikana

(If you do not come back my life will lose its direction)

It is a revelation of the 'seriousness' of the feeling of a true lover and tries to show how 'convinced' the youth are about love providing a direction to their life. There is a yearning for true love and a committed companion indicating at the same time how difficult it is to achieve both. To achieve both, the youth are
ready to undergo all hardships as expressed in the following song (Appendix XXIII) *Modhur modhur chauni re tor* (Your glances are very sweet) by Bhoomi from the album *Yatra Shuru (Beginning of the Journey, Times Music, 2000).*

Bidhuk hajar kanta tobu golap amar chai

*(Let thousand thorns prick me, I want the rose).*

Here 'rose' stands for 'true love' and 'companionship' depicting the preciousness of both whereas 'thorn' represents 'hardship' and 'suffering' which have to be faced in the path of love. Only by sheer 'determination' and 'courage' can true love be achieved, both of which are the features of youth. This song celebrates the temperament of 'desperation' and a sense of true 'commitment' among the youth to win over their love. This true commitment of the young lover makes him wait eagerly for his sweetheart. The song (Appendix XXIV) *Tomar Dekha Nai (You did not come)* by the band Bhoomi from the same album depicts the seriousness of the lover by his eagerness and impatience to meet his lover who is late in coming. The repetition of the line

Calling er ghanta shune chute giye darja khuli

*(Hearing the calling bell I have been running to open the door)*

time and again in the song emphasizes the innocence and yearning of the lover for his sweetheart and the truth in his emotions. A similar sentiment has also been revealed in the song *Mounomukhorota (Silence)* (Appendix XXV) by Chandrabindoo in the album *Ehabeo Phire Asha Jay (This can be the way to Comeback)* (Asha audio 2005). The song portrays the feeling of a lover who is hesitant to propose to his sweetheart and waits for her reply when he does the same. The youth is depicted here as nervous, not having the courage to ask the lover about her feelings, yet at the same time anxious to know the reply. The words

Sammotir Pratyashay *(expectation for consent)*

very aptly shows the above feelings.
That love has also been a source of 'pain', 'suffering', 'loneliness' as well as 'frustration' among the youth has been very well depicted in the following song by Miles (Best of Miles) (Appendix XXVI)

Nissho korechho amay ki nithur chholonay
Tumi hina e hriday amar ekaki ashohay
Keno tumi michhey maya e bedhechhile amay tokhon?

(You have made me desolate with your rude deception/ My heart feels lonely and helpless without you/ Why did you bind me in such an illusion?)

In the above lines the feeling of a youth after being betrayed in love has been projected. True love in youth hood signifies a feeling of 'selflessness', 'emotional attachment', 'complete trust' and an ultimate 'submission' to the person whom one loves. Therefore the 'pain' the youth feel after rejection can be mentally shattering and can create a feeling of 'insecurity' and 'repentance' among them. This has been reflected in the song Keno Korle (Why did you do this?) by Fossils (Appendix XXVII) in the album Fossils 2 (Asha Audio 2004). In the song the young lover repents the breakup of his relationship and expresses the fact that he/she has lost faith in any relationship. The line

Notun parichay bare shudhu e glani

(New acquaintances only increase frustration and sadness)

expresses a feeling of alienation of the lover.

Besides portraying them as 'compassionate' lovers, the songs of the Bangla Band also construct a contrasting image of the youth when they are shown to be rejecting love. This 'condescending' attitude of the youth towards love is revealed through the following song (Appendix IV) by Chandrabindoo from the album Aar Janina (T-series, 1997).

Keu bhalobeshey joy kore gota bishwo
Keu bhalobeshey hoy babaji r shishyo
Keu bhalobeshhey gaye dheley dey kerosene
Ami shob bhalobasha bhuley bodo hobo ekdin

(Some conquer the world in love / Some become disciples of gurus in love /
Some pour kerosene on themselves in love / Ignoring love I would grow up
one day)

The song upholds an impact of love on people. Love in the 'conventional' sense
implies an expression of 'passion', 'sacrifice' and an ability to transcend beyond
material pleasure. But all these expressions of love have been rejected as
'traditional' by the contemporary youth and have been tagged as a hindrance in
the path of 'material success' largely measured in terms of attractive 'pay
package'. Success makes one self-centred. This urge to surpass emotions in
order to be better of than others is a typical trait of modern youth. A similar
attitude of dejection amongst the contemporary youth towards love has been
portrayed by the following song Sweetheart (Appendix XXVIII) of
Chandrabindoo from the album Aar Janina (1997)

Bondhura purse khuley ekey okey takey toley
Amar pranta korey chanman chanman

Sweetheart I'm sitting alone
Sweetheart for me there's none

(Friends open their purses and pick up any one / My heart goes restless...)

This apparently humorous representation is that of a youth's first experience in
college. But it carries a significant portrayal of the 'superficiality' and 'fragility'
of the contemporary love relationships among the youth where 'money' matters
rather than the 'personal attributes' of the lover. The dimensions of
'inconstancy', 'inconsistency' and 'anonymity' can be said to be the markers of
love relationships among the youth of today as portrayed by the present song.
The 'durability' of these relationships here depends on 'money' and no time and
effort are spent on 'nurturing' them. The momentariness in contemporary love relations is much like the typical monetary transactions in the marketplace.

Youth have been a lover of nature as well. The love for nature makes the youth philosophical and thoughtful. They admire the beauty and serenity of nature but also realize the fact that this beauty is a garb which covers the existing inequalities between human beings in the society. The song *Hai Bhalobashi (Oh! I love)* by *Moheener Ghoraguli* from the album *Maya* (Illusion) express such a sentiment of the young generation. In the song (Appendix XXIX) the youth feel for those who are manual labourers, farmers and all those who toil hard all along the day and are not being able to enjoy the nature and its goodness. They realize that not everything is beautiful in nature and urge everyone to make the society beautiful so that all human beings can love nature together. A deper analysis of the song would reveal an ambiguity in the nature of contemporary youth. On the one hand they enjoy their middle class activities like reading books and listening to western and Indian classical music as well as popular music and also cherish the paintings of renowned artists. On the other hand it is this same youth who feel so deeply for the downtrodden and understand their sorrows and hardships and want their sufferings to come to an end. By doing this they show an inherent and underlying love and respect for humanity. Love for humanity has also been echoed in the song *Sabai to insaan (All are humans)* from the album *Abar Bochhor Kuri Pore (Again after twenty years)* by *Moheener Ghoraguli*, the following lines reflect this sentiment of the youth.

Ke Ba Badshah Ke ba Fakir  
Sabai to insaan re  
Sabai to insaan

(Who is a king, who is a pauper? /All are humans/All are humans)

In the song (Appendix XXX) the young generation takes a philosophical
approach to life and state that the humans have come to this world for a limited period, therefore it is useless for the humans to fight amongst themselves. There is also an appeal to the humans to spread the doctrine of 'universal brotherhood' and love for the fellow beings irrespective of divisions on the basis of caste, class, religion and gender. The youth further state that to the Almighty all are equal and it is the Almighty who does justice to all humans. This song expresses the youth's true love and feelings for humanity and well as for the Almighty. It is they who probably have the capability to transcend beyond all divisions which are man-made and love humans unconditionally. The song reveals the simplicity, innocence and vulnerability of the youth because in it they have been portrayed as having the capacity to resign to an absolute force.

4.5 Conclusion

A brief discussion on each of the foregoing sections in the present chapter reveals the inherent dualism in the attitude of the youth as far as the songs of the Bangla Bands are concerned. They have been portrayed as having an extreme materialist orientation, who weigh success only in terms of money. They are 'rational', 'over ambitious', 'opportunist', and to a certain extent 'hypocritical'. Paradoxically enough they are also depicted as a force welcoming change in the same social order. They critique its existing expressions of 'inequality' and 'monotony' and thereby present themselves as radical, and a revolutionary force. On the one hand they take advantage of the existing opportunities on the other hand they are sensitive enough to its disparities. This sensitivity is important because it shows that the youth are conscious of the social malpractices. The presence of such consciousness is probably the first step towards social reconstruction. Last, though not the least the Bangla Bands also project a contrast in their attitude as far as 'love' is concerned. It is the same youth (as shown by the songs) who 'patronize' love as well as 'mocks' it.
Therefore the opposed elements of 'passion' and 'detachment' exist simultaneously in them. It is due to such a 'colorful' combination of contradictory qualities as well as the presence of elements both western and traditionally Indian which make the youth an interesting and a lively topic of sociological analysis.

Endnotes

1. The trope of merit is a central plank of the ideology of the new middle class…The ideology of merit holds that success in business or career is, or should be, purely a matter of individual talent, effort and hard work.’ (Ray and Baviskar edited Elite and Everyman: The cultural politics of the Indian Middle Classes, 2011 p. 185).

2. While the 'old' middle class was dependent on public sector jobs, the 'new' middle class locates itself primarily within the rapidly expanding private sector and the globalized economy’ (ibid p. 168).

3. The uniqueness of the youth lies in their potentiality for a new start; their willingness to penetrate into a world of experience. The distinctiveness of youth lies in the fact that they are not completely involved in the status quo of the social order. Youth are “unattached” to and “unsettled” in the society; they have not yet developed any vested interest in the maintenance of the status quo. That is the youth are not yet imprisoned into fixed social contexts.’ (Oommen, T.K: State and Society in India: Studies in Nation Building, 1990 p. 195).

4. According to Saraswathi, 'youth is supposed to be a group with specific characteristics like energy, physical stamina and speed. These characteristics include readiness for new, openness to innovations, curiosity, vulnerability, gregariousness, capacity for strong frievdship, capacity to take interest in public matters, and many others'. (Saraswathi, S: Youth in India, 1988 p. 409).