

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
“ENVIRONMENT, AGRICULTURE & HUMAN WELFARE: AN OVERVIEW OF
SUSTAINABLE GOALS OF FUTURE”
26TH November, 2023

**The Role of Student Activism in Shaping Socioeconomic Policies
in Postcolonial Bengal**

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Abstract

Student activism has played a significant role in shaping the political, social, and economic landscape of postcolonial Bengal. From the early years after independence to subsequent periods of political transformation, student organizations and movements emerged as important platforms for expressing demands related to education, employment, economic inequality, food security, land rights, and social justice. This study examines the role of student activism in influencing socioeconomic policies and public discourse in Bengal, with particular attention to the ways in which student movements connected campus-based concerns with wider societal issues. It explores major phases of student mobilization, the ideological orientations of student organizations, and their interactions with political parties, civil society, and state institutions. The study also considers how student protests, campaigns, strikes, and collective actions contributed to debates surrounding educational reform, unemployment, food shortages, agrarian concerns, and economic development. At the same time, it investigates the limitations and challenges faced by student movements, including political polarization, institutional pressures, and changing patterns of youth participation. By examining student activism as both a form of political engagement and a mechanism of social transformation, the study highlights its broader influence on policy priorities and democratic participation in postcolonial Bengal. Overall, student movements demonstrate how youth-led collective action can shape public policy, challenge established power structures, and contribute to evolving ideas of socioeconomic justice.

Keywords: Student activism, postcolonial Bengal, youth movements, socioeconomic policy, political mobilization, education, social justice, unemployment, public policy, political participation.