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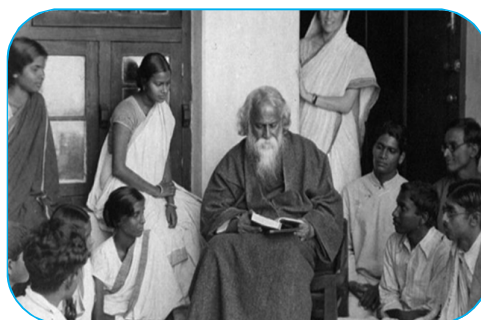
GLOBAL HUMANISM IN EDUCATION: TAGORE'S VISION OF INTERNATIONALISM AND ITS RELEVANCE IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the concept of global humanism in education as articulated by Rabindranath Tagore, with a particular focus on his vision of internationalism and its contemporary relevance. Tagore proposed an alternative educational paradigm that transcended narrow nationalism and emphasized universal human values, cultural exchange, and intellectual freedom. His educational experiments at Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati University embodied these ideals. This study employs a qualitative and interpretative methodology, drawing upon primary texts and critical scholarship. It explores Tagore's ideas of universal humanism, cross-cultural dialogue, and education beyond political boundaries. The paper also evaluates the relevance of his philosophy in the context of globalization, multiculturalism, and India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The findings suggest that Tagore's educational vision remains profoundly relevant in fostering inclusive, ethical, and globally conscious education systems.



KEYWORDS: *Global Humanism, Internationalism, Tagore, Holistic, humanism, cross-cultural dialogues, Education, Multiculturalism, globalization and NEP 2020.*

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a vital reflection of the socio-cultural and political dynamics of a nation, shaping both individual consciousness and collective identity. During colonial rule in India, the British education system was primarily designed to serve administrative purposes, emphasizing rote learning and bureaucratic efficiency over intellectual curiosity and cultural rootedness (Kumar, 2004). This system largely ignored indigenous knowledge traditions and creative expression. In response to this limitation, Rabindranath Tagore proposed a holistic and humanistic model of education grounded in freedom, creativity, and universal values, aiming to nurture well-rounded individuals rather than mere functionaries.

Tagore's educational philosophy was deeply influenced by his belief in the fundamental unity of humanity and the interconnectedness of all life. He rejected rigid institutional frameworks and mechanical methods of teaching, advocating instead for experiential learning, artistic engagement, and harmony with nature. For Tagore, education was not confined to textbooks but extended to life itself, encouraging students to explore, question, and create. His concept of global humanism sought to transcend national and cultural boundaries, fostering a spirit of universal brotherhood and mutual respect among individuals (Sen, 1997).

Through innovative institutions such as Santiniketan and Visva-Bharati University, Tagore translated his philosophy into practice. These centers promoted open-air learning, cultural exchange, and intellectual collaboration across nations. By bringing together diverse traditions and perspectives, Tagore created an educational environment that embodied his vision of internationalism. His ideas continue to hold relevance in contemporary educational discourse, especially in the context of globalization and multicultural learning.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the concept of global humanism in Tagore's educational philosophy.
- To explore Tagore's vision of internationalism and its philosophical foundations.
- To examine the implementation of his ideas in his educational institutions.
- To assess the relevance of Tagore's educational thought in contemporary contexts.
- To compare his philosophy with modern educational frameworks such as NEP 2020.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tagore's educational philosophy has been extensively examined by scholars who situate it against the backdrop of colonial India's rigid and utilitarian system of education. Krishna Kumar (2004) offers a critical evaluation of colonial pedagogy, arguing that it suppressed creativity and indigenous knowledge. In contrast, Rabindranath Tagore envisioned an education system rooted in freedom, imagination, and cultural relevance. Kumar highlights Tagore's insistence on learner-centered education that nurtures curiosity and critical thinking rather than mechanical memorization.

Amartya Sen (1997) interprets Tagore as a global thinker who transcended narrow nationalism and promoted intercultural dialogue and human unity. Sen emphasizes Tagore's belief in the synthesis of Eastern and Western traditions, advocating a cosmopolitan outlook in education. Similarly, S. Radhakrishnan (1961) explores the spiritual dimensions of Tagore's thought, presenting education as a process of self-realization and moral awakening grounded in universal human values.

Further contributions by Humayun Kabir (1955) and K. G. Saiyidain (1965) focus on Tagore's practical experiments, particularly at Santiniketan, where art, nature, and ethical learning were integrated into the curriculum. While these studies provide foundational insights, there remains a need to connect Tagore's vision with contemporary global educational challenges, which this study seeks to address.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative and interpretative approach to examine the educational philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore, focusing on his concept of global humanism and internationalism. The study primarily relies on a close reading of primary sources, including Tagore's essays, lectures, letters, and literary works such as *Gitanjali* and *Personality*. These texts provide direct insight into his philosophical ideas, pedagogical principles, and vision of education. Through careful textual analysis, the study seeks to identify recurring themes such as universal brotherhood, cultural synthesis, and the role of creativity and freedom in learning.

In addition to primary materials, the research incorporates secondary sources, including scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and relevant policy documents such as the National Education Policy 2020. These sources help contextualize Tagore's ideas within broader academic discussions and contemporary educational frameworks. The methodology involves comparing and synthesizing different scholarly perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding of his philosophy.

The analysis is grounded in philosophical inquiry and interpretative methods, allowing for a critical evaluation of Tagore's ideas in present contexts. This approach facilitates an exploration of their continuing relevance in addressing modern educational challenges such as globalization, multiculturalism, and value-based learning.

5. TAGORE'S CONCEPT OF GLOBAL HUMANISM

Tagore's global humanism is deeply rooted in the idea of universal unity and spiritual interconnectedness, reflecting his belief that all human beings are bound by a shared essence that transcends divisions of race, religion, and nationality. For Rabindranath Tagore, education was not merely an intellectual exercise but a moral and spiritual journey aimed at cultivating empathy, ethical awareness, and harmony with the world (Tagore, 1917). He envisioned education as a means of nurturing a sense of responsibility toward others and fostering a deeper connection with nature and humanity.

Tagore emphasized that education must move beyond the mere transmission of information and instead promote a holistic understanding of life. He argued that true learning involves the development of sensitivity, imagination, and moral insight. As he has clearly stated, "the highest education is that which makes our life in harmony with all existence" (Tagore, 1917, p. 52). This perspective underscores his belief that knowledge should lead to self-realization and social harmony.

His humanistic approach integrates intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, making education a transformative process. By encouraging creativity, reflection, and ethical engagement, Tagore's philosophy continues to offer a meaningful framework for contemporary education.

6. TAGORE'S VISION OF INTERNATIONALISM

Tagore's internationalism emerged as a powerful critique of aggressive nationalism, which he perceived as a narrow and divisive ideology. In the early twentieth century, when nationalism was gaining momentum across the world, Rabindranath Tagore warned against its potential to foster intolerance, conflict, and a sense of superiority among nations. He argued that nationalism, when driven by political and economic interests alone, tends to isolate individuals from the broader human community and undermines the spirit of universal brotherhood (Tagore, 1917). Instead of promoting unity, such nationalism often leads to competition, hostility, and fragmentation.

In contrast, Tagore advocated for a vision of internationalism grounded in cooperation, mutual respect, and cultural understanding. His concept of internationalism did not seek to erase national identities but aimed to harmonize them within a larger framework of global unity. He believed that every culture possesses unique values and traditions that contribute to the richness of human civilization. Therefore, education should encourage openness to diverse perspectives and foster a spirit of dialogue rather than division.

Tagore's extensive travels across Europe, America, and Asia played a significant role in shaping his global outlook. Through his interactions with intellectuals, artists, and educators from different cultural backgrounds, he developed a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of human societies. These experiences reinforced his belief in the importance of cross-cultural exchange and intellectual collaboration. As Sen (1997) observes, Tagore envisioned education as a means to cultivate global citizenship by promoting understanding, tolerance, and respect among individuals from different parts of the world.

Thus, Tagore's internationalism presents a visionary framework that emphasizes unity in diversity and highlights the role of education in building a more peaceful and inclusive global society.

7. EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENTS AT SANTINIKETAN AND VISVA-BHARATI

At Santiniketan, Rabindranath Tagore introduced a distinctive open-air schooling system that broke away from the rigid, classroom-bound practices of colonial education. Learning took place in close proximity to nature, allowing students to develop a sense of harmony with their surroundings. This environment encouraged curiosity, creativity, and freedom of expression. The curriculum was thoughtfully designed to include arts, literature, music, and philosophy, ensuring a balanced and holistic development of the learner. Tagore believed that education should nurture not only the intellect but also the emotional and aesthetic sensibilities of students (Kabir, 1955). Activities such as music, painting, and drama were integral to the learning process, fostering imagination and cultural awareness.

Building upon the success of Santiniketan, Tagore established Visva-Bharati University as an international center of higher learning. The institution aimed to bring together scholars, artists, and students from different parts of the world to promote intellectual exchange and cultural dialogue. Its motto, "Yatra visvam bhavatyekanidam" (where the world makes a home in a single nest), encapsulates Tagore's vision of global unity. Visva-Bharati thus became a living embodiment of his ideals of internationalism and universal humanism.

8. RELEVANCE IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

8.1 Globalization and Cultural Exchange

Tagore's emphasis on cultural dialogue is crucial in addressing the challenges of globalization, where cultural conflicts often arise.

8.2 Multicultural Education

His inclusive approach supports diversity and promotes respect for different cultural identities.

8.3 Value-Based Education

Tagore's focus on ethical and spiritual development aligns with contemporary efforts to integrate values into education.

8.4 NEP 2020 and Tagore's Vision

India's National Education Policy 2020 reflects several aspects of Tagore's philosophy, including holistic learning, interdisciplinary and creativity (Government of India, 2020).

9. COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Modern education systems increasingly emphasize technology, skill development, and employability, aligning curricula with market demands and global competitiveness. While this approach equips learners with practical competencies required in the digital and professional world, it often places less emphasis on the cultivation of human values, creativity, and ethical awareness. In contrast, Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy foregrounds the development of the whole individual—intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Tagore believed that education should nurture imagination, sensitivity, and a deep sense of responsibility toward society and nature, rather than merely preparing individuals for economic productivity.

However, the dichotomy between these two approaches need not be absolute. A synthesis of modern technological education and Tagore's humanistic ideals can create a more balanced and meaningful educational framework. By integrating digital literacy and vocational skills with creativity, ethical reasoning, and cultural awareness, education can become both practical and transformative. Such an approach would not only prepare students for employment but also shape them into thoughtful, compassionate, and globally responsible citizens. In this context, Tagore's vision remains highly relevant as a corrective to the overly mechanistic tendencies of contemporary education systems.

10. FINDINGS

- Tagore's global humanism promotes unity and ethical development.
- His internationalism encourages cultural exchange and global citizenship.
- His educational institutions successfully implemented his philosophy.
- His ideas remain relevant in contemporary education systems.
- A large number of Tagore's principles reflects NEP 2020.

CONCLUSION

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy offers a timeless and transformative framework for addressing the complex challenges of modern education. His vision of global humanism and internationalism places strong emphasis on unity in diversity, creative freedom, and ethical development, all of which are essential in today's rapidly globalizing and culturally diverse world.

Tagore believed that education should not merely prepare individuals for economic success but should cultivate empathy, moral responsibility, and a deep sense of connection with humanity and nature.

In the present context, where education often becomes overly mechanized and market-driven, Tagore's ideas serve as a necessary corrective by reintroducing the importance of holistic and value-based learning. His emphasis on intercultural dialogue, creativity, and experiential learning aligns closely with contemporary educational needs. Therefore, integrating Tagore's humanistic ideals into modern educational practices can contribute to building a more inclusive, compassionate, and globally conscious society.

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