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Relevance of Tagore's Literature in India's National Education Policy 2020

Supriya Debnath¹

Abstract:

Rabindranath Tagore's literature holds significant relevance in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, emphasizing holistic and inclusive education. Tagore, a visionary educationist, advocated for an education system that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and the holistic development of individuals. His educational philosophy, which emphasized the interconnectedness of nature, culture, and education, aligns closely with the NEP 2020's focus on experiential learning, interdisciplinary studies, and the integration of arts and sciences. Tagore's literary works, rich in cultural and ethical values, promote a deep sense of empathy, inclusivity, and respect for diversity—core tenets of the NEP 2020. Integrating Tagore's ideals, the policy aims to develop not just academic proficiency but also the moral and emotional intelligence of students, preparing them for global citizenship. His advocacy for mother tongue-based education and the significance of cultural roots resonate with the policy's emphasis on multilingualism and the preservation of local cultures. Tagore's pioneering concept of the 'world school' at Visva-Bharati reflects the NEP's vision of transforming India into a global knowledge hub. His stress on the teacher-student relationship, autonomy in learning, and the joy of discovery are principles that NEP 2020 seeks to revive in the contemporary education system. Incorporating Tagore's literary and educational philosophy can thus enhance the policy's goal of fostering a balanced, inclusive, and future-ready education system in India, imbued with the values of compassion, cultural understanding, and holistic development.

Keywords: Holistic learning, Creativity, Critical thinking, Inclusivity, Experiential education, NEP 2020.

Introduction:

Rabindranath Tagore, a luminary in the realm of literature and education, remains a towering figure whose ideas have left an indelible mark on Indian society and beyond. As a polymath, Tagore's contributions extend across poetry, music, art, and educational philosophy. His approach to education was revolutionary, emphasizing holistic development, creativity, and the importance of connecting with nature. Tagore's vision materialized through the establishment of Visva-Bharati University in 1921, a unique institution that aimed to blend the best of Eastern and Western educational traditions. Tagore's educational philosophy underscores the development of free-thinking individuals who are not merely repositories of information but are capable of critical thought and self-expression. He advocated for an education system that nurtures creativity, cultural understanding, and a sense of global citizenship. His literary works, rich with humanistic and philosophical themes, also reflect these educational ideals, advocating for a world where education transcends the confines of conventional learning to embrace broader, more inclusive goals. India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) aims to transform the educational landscape of the country by addressing the needs of the 21st

¹ State Aided College Teacher, Department of Sanskrit, Kalna College, Kalna, West Bengal, India



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century. This policy, introduced by the Indian government, emphasizes accessibility, equity, quality, and affordability in education. NEP 2020 seeks to overhaul the existing educational framework, introducing a more flexible and multidisciplinary approach. It promotes experiential learning, critical thinking, and creative skills, echoing many of Tagore's educational principles. The policy advocates for the integration of vocational education, the use of technology in learning, and the importance of early childhood care and education. Furthermore, it aims to reduce the emphasis on rote learning, fostering an environment where students are encouraged to engage in lifelong learning and holistic development. Aligning itself with the philosophies espoused by Rabindranath Tagore, NEP 2020 reflects a renewed commitment to an educational framework that prioritizes the comprehensive development of individuals, preparing them to meet the challenges of an interconnected and rapidly evolving world. The relevance of Tagore's literature and educational ideas in the context of NEP 2020 is profound, as they continue to inspire an educational paradigm that values creativity, critical thinking, and a deep connection to both cultural roots and global awareness.

Holistic Development:

Rabindranath Tagore's literature and educational philosophy hold significant relevance to India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly in the context of holistic development. Tagore's vision for education was deeply rooted in nurturing the complete personality of an individual, which aligns closely with the goals of NEP 2020. Here are key points illustrating this connection:

Holistic Development in Tagore's Philosophy

1. All-Round Development:

- **Physical:** Tagore emphasized the importance of physical activities and contact with nature as essential components of education. He believed that physical health and a connection with the environment fostered overall well-being and creativity.
- **Intellectual:** Tagore advocated for an education system that stimulated curiosity and critical thinking, rather than rote learning. His literary works often explore themes of free thought and the importance of imagination.
- **Emotional:** Emotional growth was central to Tagore's educational approach. He promoted the nurturing of emotions through arts, music, and literature, encouraging students to develop empathy, self-awareness, and a sense of beauty.

Holistic Development in NEP 2020

1. Integration of Academic and Extra-Curricular Activities:

- NEP 2020 emphasizes the integration of academic learning with arts, sports, and other extra-curricular activities. This approach aims to develop students' cognitive, social, and emotional skills, ensuring a well-rounded education.
- The policy seeks to break down the silos between different areas of learning, encouraging a more interdisciplinary and experiential approach that echoes Tagore's ideals.



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2. Focus on Creativity and Critical Thinking:

- Similar to Tagore's emphasis on intellectual development, NEP 2020 stresses the need to move away from rote memorization towards fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity in students.
- The policy promotes experiential learning, including activities like projects, internships, and research, which are designed to make learning more engaging and relevant.

3. Emphasis on Emotional and Social Skills:

- NEP 2020 acknowledges the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) as part of a student's development. This includes teaching skills such as empathy, self-regulation, and teamwork, which are integral to Tagore's educational philosophy.
- The inclusion of arts and culture in the curriculum is intended to help students develop a deeper emotional understanding and appreciation for diverse cultural perspectives, reflecting Tagore's belief in the emotional enrichment of education.

The alignment between Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy and NEP 2020 underscores the timeless relevance of Tagore's ideas. Both advocate for a holistic approach to education that goes beyond academic achievements to include physical, intellectual, and emotional growth. Integrating these elements, NEP 2020 aims to foster well-rounded individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also emotionally intelligent, creative, and socially responsible, much like the vision Tagore had for education.

Interdisciplinary Approach:

Rabindranath Tagore's contributions to education and literature have significant relevance to India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly in the context of an interdisciplinary approach. Tagore's vision for education emphasized the integration of arts, sciences, and humanities, which aligns closely with the NEP 2020's promotion of multidisciplinary education. Here are some key points that highlight this relevance:

Tagore's Advocacy for Interdisciplinary Education

1. Holistic Learning:

- Tagore believed in a holistic approach to education that transcends rigid disciplinary boundaries. He advocated for an educational system that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and a deep appreciation for culture and nature.
- His school, Visva-Bharati, was designed to provide a curriculum that included literature, music, art, and sciences, fostering a well-rounded education.

2. Integration of Arts and Sciences:

- Tagore emphasized that arts and sciences should not be taught in isolation. He argued that understanding scientific principles could enhance artistic creativity, and vice versa.
- This integration can help students develop a more comprehensive understanding of the world, encouraging innovative thinking and problem-solving skills.



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NEP 2020's Promotion of Multidisciplinary Education

1. Flexible Curriculum Structures:

- NEP 2020 advocates for a flexible and multidisciplinary curriculum that allows students to choose subjects across various streams. This approach is designed to break down the silos between different fields of study.
- Schools and higher education institutions are encouraged to offer a broad spectrum of subjects, enabling students to tailor their education according to their interests and career aspirations.

2. Emphasis on Critical Thinking and Creativity:

- The policy emphasizes the importance of critical thinking, creativity, and analytical skills, which are nurtured through an interdisciplinary approach.
- Drawing inspiration from Tagore's educational philosophy, NEP 2020 aims to create an environment where students can explore diverse subjects, fostering a culture of innovation and intellectual curiosity.

Practical Implementation

1. Curriculum Design:

- Schools can design their curricula to include project-based learning that involves multiple disciplines, such as combining environmental science with art or history with technology.
- This mirrors Tagore's methodology of learning through activities that engage multiple senses and intellectual faculties.

2. Teacher Training:

- Teachers need to be trained to adopt an interdisciplinary approach, integrating lessons from various fields to provide a richer learning experience.
- Tagore's educational philosophy can serve as a guiding framework for developing such training programs.

The relevance of Tagore's literature and educational philosophy to India's NEP 2020 lies in their shared vision of an interdisciplinary approach to learning. Blending arts, sciences, and humanities, both Tagore's ideas and NEP 2020 aim to create a more holistic, flexible, and creative educational environment. This alignment underscores the enduring impact of Tagore's vision on contemporary educational reforms and highlights the importance of integrating his principles into modern educational practices.

Mother Tongue and Cultural Identity:

Rabindranath Tagore's literature and educational philosophy hold significant relevance to India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly in the areas of mother tongue instruction and cultural identity. Here are key points connecting Tagore's ideas to NEP 2020:

Tagore's Promotion of Education in the Mother Tongue



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1. Mother Tongue Instruction:

- Tagore was a strong advocate for education in the mother tongue. He believed that learning in one's native language allows for a more profound and meaningful understanding of subjects and helps maintain a child's cultural roots.
- He established Visva-Bharati University with the aim of promoting cultural exchange and education through regional languages.

2. Cultural Identity:

- Tagore emphasized the importance of cultural identity and heritage in education. He believed that understanding and appreciating one's culture fosters a sense of pride and belonging.
- His works often highlight the significance of cultural preservation and the dangers of losing cultural identity in the face of globalization and colonial influence.

NEP 2020's Emphasis on Multilingual Education and Preservation of Cultural Heritage

1. Multilingual Education:

- NEP 2020 strongly advocates for multilingualism in education. It proposes that children should be taught in their mother tongue or regional language until at least Grade 5, and preferably until Grade 8.
- This aligns with Tagore's vision, as it recognizes the cognitive and emotional benefits of learning in one's native language.

2. Cultural Heritage:

- The policy emphasizes the need to preserve and promote India's diverse cultural heritage. It encourages the incorporation of local culture, traditions, and knowledge systems into the curriculum.
- NEP 2020 aims to instill a sense of pride in India's rich cultural diversity, echoing Tagore's belief in the importance of cultural education.

3. Holistic Education:

- Both Tagore's educational philosophy and NEP 2020 stress the importance of holistic education, which includes arts, humanities, physical education, and vocational skills alongside academic learning.
- Tagore's Santiniketan embodied this holistic approach, blending academics with arts, crafts, and an appreciation for nature.

Tagore's literary and educational contributions significantly resonate with the objectives of NEP 2020. His emphasis on mother tongue instruction and cultural identity finds a strong parallel in the policy's focus on multilingual education and the preservation of cultural heritage. Integrating these elements, NEP 2020 not only honors Tagore's legacy but also aims to create an education system that is inclusive, culturally rooted, and globally competitive.

Experiential Learning:



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Rabindranath Tagore, a towering figure in Indian literature and philosophy, profoundly influenced educational thought through his emphasis on experiential learning, creativity, and critical thinking. His vision for education aligns closely with the aims of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Here's a detailed exploration of the relevance of Tagore's literature and educational philosophy to the key aspects of NEP 2020:

Tagore's Vision:

Tagore believed in learning through direct experience and engagement with the environment. He emphasized the importance of connecting education with nature, the arts, and real-life experiences. Tagore's school, Shantiniketan, was a manifestation of this vision, where learning was integrated with activities like gardening, music, art, and theatre, fostering a holistic development of students.

NEP 2020:

- The NEP 2020 incorporates experiential learning methods prominently, recognizing the importance of hands-on learning to foster deeper understanding and engagement. This includes:
- Internships: NEP 2020 emphasizes vocational education and internships from an early stage to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills.
- Project-Based Learning: It encourages project-based and inquiry-based learning to develop problem-solving skills and creativity among students.

Creativity and Critical Thinking:

Tagore's Encouragement:

Tagore advocated for an education system that nurtures creativity and critical thinking. He criticized rote learning and advocated for a curriculum that encourages students to explore, question, and express their ideas freely. Tagore's literature, with its rich poetic and philosophical insights, often explored themes of individual creativity, freedom of thought, and the pursuit of truth.

NEP 2020:

- Aligning with Tagore's ideals, NEP 2020 emphasizes the development of critical thinking and creativity among students. It seeks to:
- Reduce Rote Learning: The policy aims to move away from rote learning by promoting understanding and application of knowledge.
- Holistic Development: NEP 2020 advocates for a holistic approach to education, encouraging activities that stimulate creative expression and critical thinking, such as arts, sports, and extracurricular activities.
- Interdisciplinary Approach: The policy supports an interdisciplinary approach to learning, encouraging students to connect different fields of study, fostering innovative and critical thought processes.

Synthesis of Tagore's Philosophy with NEP 2020



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- **Learning Beyond Classrooms:** Both Tagore's philosophy and NEP 2020 stress the importance of learning beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. The inclusion of experiential learning in NEP 2020 mirrors Tagore's method of integrating education with the natural and cultural environment.
- **Personalized Learning:** Tagore's emphasis on individualized education, where each student's unique talents and interests are nurtured, is echoed in NEP 2020's focus on personalized learning paths and the use of technology to tailor educational experiences.
- **Ethical and Humanistic Education:** Tagore's vision of education was deeply humanistic, aimed at the development of compassionate and responsible individuals. NEP 2020 also aims to instill ethical values and humanistic concerns in students, promoting a more empathetic and socially conscious citizenry.

Rabindranath Tagore's literature and educational philosophy have a profound relevance to the aims and methods outlined in India's NEP 2020. Both advocate for a comprehensive, student-centered approach to education that fosters experiential learning, creativity, and critical thinking, ensuring the holistic development of students.

Teacher's Role:

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy deeply valued the role of teachers as facilitators and guides, rather than mere transmitters of information. This philosophy is reflected in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which places significant emphasis on transforming the role of teachers to better align with Tagore's vision.

Tagore's Belief in the Role of Teachers

Facilitators and Guides:

- Tagore envisioned teachers as facilitators who create an environment conducive to learning, allowing students to explore and discover knowledge independently. He believed education should be holistic, nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and the overall development of the individual.
- Teachers, according to Tagore, should inspire students, encourage curiosity, and guide them through their educational journey, rather than dictating and imposing knowledge.

NEP 2020 and Teacher Training and Development

Emphasis on Professional Development:

- NEP 2020 recognizes the critical role teachers play in shaping the future of students and, by extension, the nation. It emphasizes continuous professional development, ensuring that teachers are equipped with the latest pedagogical skills and knowledge.
- The policy advocates for regular in-service training, access to professional development courses, and opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative learning.

Mentorship Role:



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- NEP 2020 introduces a shift from traditional teacher-centered pedagogy to a more student-centered approach, aligning with Tagore's belief. Teachers are encouraged to act as mentors, guiding students through experiential learning and fostering a culture of inquiry and exploration.
- The policy promotes the creation of a nurturing and inclusive classroom environment where teachers support the diverse needs of students, much like Tagore's vision of education that is tailored to the individual.

Autonomy and Empowerment:

- NEP 2020 aims to empower teachers by giving them more autonomy in the classroom, allowing for innovative teaching methods and the ability to adapt the curriculum to better suit the needs of their students. This approach mirrors Tagore's educational practices at institutions like Santiniketan, where teachers had significant freedom to explore and implement new teaching methodologies.
- Reducing bureaucratic constraints and providing support systems, the policy ensures that teachers can focus on their primary role as educators and mentors.

The NEP 2020's emphasis on teacher training, professional development, and the role of teachers as mentors reflects the enduring relevance of Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy. By fostering an environment where teachers act as facilitators and guides, NEP 2020 aims to create a more holistic, student-centered educational system that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning, resonating deeply with Tagore's vision.

Global Citizenship:

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy holds significant relevance to India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly in the areas of global citizenship and flexible learning paths.

Tagore's Vision:

- Universal Brotherhood: Tagore envisioned education as a means to foster universal brotherhood and global understanding. He believed in the interconnectedness of all human beings and the importance of cultivating a spirit of global citizenship.
- Cultural Exchange: Tagore advocated for the exposure to diverse cultures and global perspectives. His establishment of Visva-Bharati University aimed to create a space where Eastern and Western philosophies could meet and enrich one another.

NEP 2020:

- Global Citizens: NEP 2020 aims to prepare students to be globally aware and responsible citizens. The policy emphasizes the importance of nurturing a sense of global citizenship by integrating international perspectives and fostering respect for diverse cultures.
- Holistic Development: The policy promotes holistic education that not only focuses on academic excellence but also on the ethical, cultural, and social development of students. This aligns with



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Tagore's vision of education shaping well-rounded individuals who can contribute positively to society.

Flexible Learning Paths:

Tagore's Advocacy:

- **Personalized Learning:** Tagore was a strong proponent of flexible and personalized learning journeys. He believed that education should cater to the individual needs and interests of each student, rather than adhering to a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach.
- **Creativity and Innovation:** He emphasized the importance of creativity and innovation in education, advocating for an environment that encourages exploration and self-expression.

NEP 2020:

- **Multiple Entry and Exit Points:** NEP 2020 introduces a flexible framework for higher education, allowing students to enter and exit programs at various points. This aligns with Tagore's advocacy for personalized learning journeys, enabling students to pursue education at their own pace and according to their individual circumstances.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach:** The policy encourages interdisciplinary learning and flexibility in course choices, which resonates with Tagore's belief in a holistic and integrated approach to education. This allows students to explore multiple fields of study and develop a broader understanding of the world.

Tagore's literature and educational philosophy find a contemporary echo in the NEP 2020, particularly in its focus on fostering global citizenship and providing flexible, personalized learning paths. Aligning with these principles, the NEP 2020 not only honors Tagore's legacy but also addresses the needs of a rapidly changing global society.

Integration of Arts and Sciences in NEP 2020:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India echoes Tagore's vision by advocating for a multidisciplinary and holistic education. Key elements include:

- **Flexibility in Curriculum:** NEP 2020 promotes flexibility in choosing subjects across streams, allowing students to study a mix of arts, sciences, and humanities, much like Tagore's model of education.
- **Holistic Development:** Emphasis on developing cognitive as well as emotional and ethical capacities, reflecting Tagore's belief in nurturing the whole person.
- **Experiential Learning:** Encouraging experiential learning, arts-integrated learning, and a greater focus on creative and critical thinking aligns with Tagore's educational practices.
- **Art Integration in Education:** NEP 2020 highlights the importance of integrating art with education to enhance creativity and innovation among students, resonating with Tagore's emphasis on the arts as an essential part of education.



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Tagore's interdisciplinary approach and his belief in the integration of arts and sciences find a modern parallel in India's NEP 2020. The policy's commitment to a holistic and flexible curriculum, fostering creativity and critical thinking, and the integration of arts into the mainstream education system, align closely with Tagore's educational ideals. His literature and educational philosophy continue to be relevant and influential in shaping contemporary educational reforms.

Conclusion:

Rabindranath Tagore's educational philosophy, which emphasizes holistic development, creativity, and the integration of nature and culture into learning, finds significant relevance in India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Tagore advocated for an education system that goes beyond rote learning, fostering critical thinking, self-reliance, and a deep connection with one's cultural heritage and the natural environment. NEP 2020 echoes these principles by promoting experiential learning, interdisciplinary studies, and a focus on the overall development of students. The NEP 2020's emphasis on flexible curricula, reduction in the rigidity of subject boundaries, and encouragement of critical and creative thinking aligns closely with Tagore's vision. It aims to create an education system that is more student-centric, holistic, and capable of nurturing individual talents and aspirations. By incorporating vocational education, arts, and sports into the mainstream curriculum, NEP 2020 endeavors to develop well-rounded individuals, much in the spirit of Tagore's holistic approach. The potential impact of NEP 2020 in realizing Tagore's vision includes fostering a more inclusive and equitable education system that respects and nurtures diversity. The policy's focus on multilingualism, the integration of local knowledge and traditions, and the use of technology in education further support Tagore's ideals. Ultimately, NEP 2020 aims to cultivate a generation of learners who are not only academically proficient but also socially and emotionally competent, creative, and environmentally conscious, embodying Tagore's educational ethos.

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