



Nazrul's Writings as a Medium of Egalitarian Education

Dr. Anamika Shil

Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan
Email: anamika.shil2012@gmail.com

Abstract:

Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings extend beyond literature and function as a powerful medium of egalitarian education. His poems and songs consistently promote values of equality, justice, and human dignity by addressing issues such as gender discrimination, poverty, and communal division. Drawing from diverse cultural and linguistic traditions, Nazrul presents a vision of an inclusive and humane society. This paper examines selected works, such as Manush, Nari, and Daridro, to show how his writings foster social awareness and value-based learning. It argues that Nazrul's ideas remain highly relevant in shaping an inclusive and socially responsible educational perspective.

Keywords: Kazi Nazrul Islam, Egalitarian Education, Equality, Humanism, Bengali Literature, Value Education.

Introduction:

Education is often understood as a formal process that takes place within classrooms, but in reality, it extends far beyond textbooks and institutions. Literature, in many ways, acts as a powerful medium of education by shaping thoughts, values, and social awareness. Within this context, the writings of Kazi Nazrul Islam hold a significant place.

Nazrul was not merely a poet; he was a voice of resistance against injustice and inequality. His works reflect the realities of society, where divisions based on class, gender, and religion were deeply rooted. Through his poetry and songs, he consistently questioned these divisions and emphasised the idea that all human beings are equal.

What makes Nazrul's writings particularly important is their ability to connect with people on a human level. He writes about hunger, poverty, oppression, and dignity in a way that is both emotional and thought-provoking. His words do not merely describe society; they educate and awaken the reader.

The paper highlights that Nazrul's works are shaped by a rich blend of cultural and linguistic influences, which further strengthen his vision of unity and inclusiveness. This, therefore, makes his writings not only literary contributions but moreover sources of social and educational insight. This paper explores how Nazrul's writings function as a medium of egalitarian education. It focuses on how his ideas promote equality, empathy, and social justice, and on their relevance in modern education.

Objective:

To examine how Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings serve as a medium of egalitarian education by promoting equality, social justice, and human dignity.

Methodology:

The study adopts a qualitative, thematic analytical approach, focusing on selected literary works by Kazi Nazrul Islam. It involves close textual analysis of poems and songs to identify themes of equality, gender justice, and social awareness, supported by secondary scholarly sources for contextual understanding.

Concept of Egalitarian Education

Egalitarian education is a form of learning rooted in the idea of equality. It emphasises that every individual, regardless of caste, class, gender, or religion, deserves equal respect, opportunities, and dignity. In this approach, education is not limited to academic knowledge; it moreover emphasises values such as empathy, fairness, and social responsibility.

In many societies, education has often reflected existing inequalities. Certain groups have been privileged, while others have been marginalised. Egalitarian education challenges this imbalance by promoting inclusiveness and by encouraging learners to question discrimination and injustice. It seeks to create a learning environment where diversity is respected, and every voice is valued.

Literature plays an important role in this process. Through stories, poems, and narratives, learners can understand diverse human experiences and develop a deeper sense of compassion. Literature does not only inform; it transforms perspectives.

Within this context, the writings of Kazi Nazrul Islam can be seen as a strong example of egalitarian education in practice. His works consistently highlight the dignity of all human beings and oppose all forms of inequality. By addressing issues such as social injustice, gender discrimination, and communal division, Nazrul's writings encourage readers to think critically and develop a more inclusive outlook. Thus, egalitarian education is not merely a theoretical concept; it becomes meaningful when it is reflected in cultural and literary expressions. Nazrul's writings provide such a space where education and social values come together.

Human Equality in Nazrul's Writings

At the heart of Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings lies a deep and unwavering belief in human equality. For Nazrul, the identity of a human being was always greater than any divisions created by society, such as caste, religion, or class. His works repeatedly emphasise that all people are fundamentally equal and deserve equal dignity.

This idea is most powerfully expressed in his poem 'Manush,' where he writes:

“গাহি সাম্যের গান—

মানুষের চেয়ে বড় কিছু নাই, নহে কিছু মহীয়ান...”

Through these lines, Nazrul declares that there is nothing greater than human beings. He rejects all forms of hierarchy and places humanity above everything else. The poem continues to dissolve the boundaries of religion and social divisions, presenting a vision of unity in which all individuals are connected by their shared humanity. Nazrul's idea of equality is not abstract; it is deeply rooted in the social realities of his time. He witnessed discrimination, oppression, and division in society, and his writings responded to these conditions. Rather than accepting inequality as normal, he questioned it and spoke out against it.

Another important aspect of his humanism is his rejection of religious discrimination. In one of his writings, he questions those who divide people in the name of religion and reminds us that before being Hindu or Muslim, a person is simply a human being. This reflects his strong belief in unity and coexistence.

Analysis:

Nazrul's concept of human equality promotes a universal and inclusive outlook. From an educational perspective, this encourages learners to move beyond narrow identities and develop respect for all individuals. It helps in building an environment where diversity is accepted and valued.

His writing inspires critical thinking by challenging social norms that justify inequality. Rather than unquestioningly accepting traditions, learners are encouraged to question injustice and stand for what is right. Thus, Nazrul's emphasis on human equality makes his writings a powerful source of egalitarian education, as they nurture values of respect, unity, and social awareness.

Gender Equality in Nazrul's Writings

Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings present a strong and progressive voice for gender equality. At a time when women were often confined within rigid social boundaries and denied equal recognition, Nazrul challenged these norms with remarkable clarity and courage.

His poem 'Nari' stands as one of the most powerful expressions of this idea, where he writes:

“বিশ্বে যা-কিছু মহান সৃষ্টি চির-কল্যাণকর

অর্ধেক তার করিয়াছে নারী, অর্ধেক তার নর।”

In these lines, Nazrul clearly states that both men and women equally shape the world's great and meaningful achievements. This directly challenges the long-held belief that men alone are responsible for progress and creation. Instead, Nazrul brings women to the centre of recognition and respect. What makes his perspective even more significant is his ability to look beyond idealised images of women. He not only glorifies women in traditional roles but also speaks about those who are marginalised and judged by society. In his poem 'Barangana', he addresses prostitutes with deep empathy:

“কে তোমায় বলে বারান্গনা মা, কে দেয় থুতু ও গায়ে?”

Here, Nazrul questions society's tendency to shame and exclude these women. Rather than condemning them, he acknowledges their humanity and dignity. This approach was highly unconventional, as it broke away from moral judgment and focused on compassion and understanding. Nazrul's writings consistently show that inequality is not natural but socially constructed. By giving voice to women and highlighting their struggles, he exposes the unfair structures that limit their freedom and recognition.

Analysis:

Nazrul's vision of gender equality is not limited to words; it reflects a deeper call for social change. From an educational perspective, his writings encourage learners to question patriarchal norms and develop a more balanced and respectful understanding of gender roles. His works promote the idea of gender-sensitive education, where both men and women are seen as equal contributors to society. They moreover foster empathy towards those who are marginalised and often ignored.

In today's context, where gender equality remains a critical issue, Nazrul's ideas remain highly relevant. His writings serve as a reminder that true education must include respect, dignity, and equal opportunities for all.

Social and Economic Equality in Nazrul's Writings

Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings reflect a deep sensitivity towards the struggles of the poor and marginalised sections of society. He does not look at poverty from a distance; rather, he feels it, lives it, and expresses it with intense emotion. His works highlight the harsh realities of economic inequality and question the structures that enable such injustice.

In his poem 'Daridro', Nazrul presents poverty not merely as suffering, but as a force that has shaped his identity:

“হে দারিদ্র্য, তুমি মোরে করেছ মহান...”

Here, Nazrul gives a unique perspective by addressing poverty directly. Rather than seeing it only as a curse, he acknowledges how it has given him strength, courage, and a deeper understanding of life. This reflects his ability to transform personal pain into a broader social awareness. At the same time, Nazrul does not ignore the harsh realities of poverty. In another powerful expression, he writes:

“ক্ষুধাতুর শিশু চায় না স্বরাজ, চায় দুটো ভাত...”

These lines reveal a painful truth for those who are hungry: political freedom or abstract ideas have little meaning. What they need first is basic survival. Through this, Nazrul exposes the gap between ideological discussions and lived realities. His writings, moreover, show a strong sense of empathy towards workers, labourers, and the oppressed. He repeatedly raises questions about injustice and inequality, making it clear that a society cannot be considered just if a large section of its people continues to suffer.

Analysis:

Nazrul's approach to social and economic inequality is deeply human-centred. He does not treat people on low incomes as objects of pity, but as individuals with dignity and a voice. This perspective is important in shaping a more humane understanding of society.

From an educational perspective, his writings help develop learners' social awareness and empathy. They encourage students to understand the realities of inequality and to think critically about issues of justice and fairness. Nazrul's works, moreover, highlight the importance of value-based education, where learners are not only informed but also emotionally connected to social issues. By bringing attention to poverty and suffering, his writings inspire a sense of responsibility towards creating a more just and equal society.

Religious Harmony in Nazrul's Writings

Kazi Nazrul Islam's vision of equality was not limited to social or economic aspects; it extended deeply into the sphere of religion. Living in a time marked by communal tensions and divisions, Nazrul strongly opposed any form of discrimination based on religious identity. His writings consistently promote the idea that humanity stands above all religious differences.

One of the most powerful expressions of this idea can be seen in his lines:

“হিন্দু না ওরা মুসলিম? ওই জিজ্ঞাসে কোন জন?

কান্ডারী! বল, ডুবিছে মানুষ...”

Through these words, Nazrul questions the very basis of religious division. When human lives are at risk, he asks, does it really matter whether someone is Hindu or Muslim? By shifting the focus from religious identity to human identity, he presents a deeply humane and inclusive perspective.

Nazrul's own literary style reflects this unity. His writings draw equally from Hindu mythology and Islamic traditions, creating a harmonious blend of cultural elements. This fusion is not accidental; it reflects his belief in coexistence and mutual respect. As highlighted in the thesis, Nazrul's works are shaped by a rich interaction of different linguistic and cultural influences, which strengthens his message of unity.

He moreover criticised those who used religion as a tool for division and hypocrisy. In his writings, he repeatedly emphasises that true spirituality lies in compassion and respect for human beings, not in rigid rituals or blind adherence.

Analysis:

Nazrul's emphasis on religious harmony promotes a secular and inclusive worldview. From an educational perspective, this is extremely significant, as it encourages learners to move beyond narrow identities and develop a sense of shared humanity.

His writings support the idea of inclusive, multicultural education, where diverse beliefs and traditions are respected rather than opposed. They also help foster tolerance, empathy, and peaceful coexistence among individuals. In today's world, where religious conflicts still exist, Nazrul's message remains highly relevant. His works remind us that true education should unite people, not divide them.

Role of Language and Cultural Synthesis

One of the most distinctive aspects of Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings is his use of diverse linguistic and cultural elements. His works reflect a rich blend of Bengali, Persian, and Arabic influences, which gives his literature a unique depth and texture. Nazrul did not confine himself to a single linguistic tradition. Instead, he freely incorporated Persian and Arabic words, expressions, and stylistic features into his Bengali writings. This was not merely a stylistic choice but a reflection of his broader worldview. As the thesis highlights, Nazrul's engagement with multiple languages significantly shaped his literary identity and cultural outlook.

This fusion of languages, moreover, represents a deeper cultural synthesis. Through his writings, Nazrul brings together different traditions and creates a space where multiple identities coexist harmoniously. His use of Islamic imagery alongside elements of Hindu mythology further strengthens this idea of unity within diversity.

Analysis:

Nazrul's multilingual approach reflects a pluralistic and inclusive mindset. From an educational perspective, this highlights the importance of multicultural and multilingual education, where learners are exposed to diverse languages and cultural traditions.

Such an approach helps in developing openness, adaptability, and respect for different perspectives. It moreover transcends narrow cultural identities and encourages a more global and inclusive understanding of society. Thus, Nazrul's use of language is not only a literary feature but also an educational tool that promotes unity, diversity, and inclusiveness.

Educational Implications

The writings of Kazi Nazrul Islam offer valuable insights for contemporary education, especially in the context of value-based and inclusive learning. His works go beyond literary expression and function as tools that shape ethical understanding, social awareness, and human sensitivity. One of the key implications of Nazrul's writings is the promotion of value-based education. Through his emphasis on equality, justice, and human dignity, he encourages learners to develop a strong moral foundation. His poems do not simply

present ideas; they engage the reader emotionally, making the learning experience more meaningful and lasting.

Moreover, Nazrul's works support the idea of inclusive education. By rejecting divisions based on caste, religion, gender, and class, he presents a vision where every individual is valued equally. This perspective is essential in modern education systems that aim to create equal opportunities for all learners. Another important aspect is the development of critical thinking. Nazrul consistently questions social norms and challenges injustice. His writings encourage learners to think independently rather than accept existing structures without reflection. This is a crucial element of education, as it helps individuals become more aware and responsible members of society.

His focus on poverty, gender inequality, and communal harmony, moreover, fosters empathy and social responsibility. By presenting real human struggles, Nazrul enables learners to connect emotionally with social issues. This kind of awareness is essential for developing a compassionate, socially conscious mindset.

Furthermore, Nazrul's use of multiple linguistic and cultural traditions highlights the importance of multicultural education. It teaches learners to appreciate diversity and develop respect for different cultural backgrounds. Overall, Nazrul's writings demonstrate that education is not only about acquiring knowledge but also about becoming a better human being. His works provide a strong foundation for developing an inclusive, humane, and socially relevant education system.

Conclusion

Kazi Nazrul Islam's writings clearly demonstrate that literature can serve as a powerful medium of education. His works go beyond poetic expression and engage deeply with the realities of human life, addressing issues of inequality, injustice, and societal division. Through his emphasis on human equality, gender justice, social awareness, and religious harmony, Nazrul presents a vision of a society built on dignity and mutual respect. His writings do not simply describe these ideals; they actively encourage readers to reflect, question, and develop a more humane outlook.

What makes Nazrul particularly significant is his ability to connect with people on an emotional level. His words carry both sensitivity and strength, making his message more impactful and relatable. This quality transforms his literature into a form of learning that shapes not only knowledge but moreover values and attitudes.

In the context of modern education, where there is an increasing need for inclusiveness and value-based learning, Nazrul's ideas remain highly relevant. His works remind us that true education is not only about intellectual development but also about becoming socially aware, empathetic, and responsible individuals. Thus, Nazrul stands not only as a great literary figure but also as an educator whose writings continue to inspire the vision of a more equal and humane society.

References:

- Ahmed, N. (2000). Kazi Nazrul Islam: Life and works. Dhaka: Nazrul Institute.
- Chakraborty, B. (1998). Studies in modern Bengali literature. Kolkata: Firma KLM.
- Chatterjee, P. (1986). Nationalist thought and the colonial world: A derivative discourse. London: Zed Books.
- Das, S. K. (1991). A history of Indian literature (Vol. 8). New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education*. New York: Macmillan.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Islam, K. N. (1922/2000). *Agnibeena*. Kolkata: Dey's Publishing, pp. 1–5.
- Islam, K. N. (1924/2000). *Bisher banshi*. Kolkata: Dey's Publishing, pp. 15–30.
- Islam, K. N. (1925/2000). *Samyabadi*. Kolkata: Dey's Publishing, pp. 1–3.
- Islam, K. N. (1928/2011). *Sanchita*. Kolkata: Paschim Banga Bangla Akademi, pp. 120–145.
- Islam, K. N. (2011). *Nazrul Rachanabali*, pp. 1–10. Kolkata: Paschim Banga Bangla Akademi, pp. 200–260.
- Kabir, H. (1966). *Nazrul Islam*. Dhaka: Bangla Academy.
- Noddings, N. (2012). *Philosophy of education* (3rd ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Sattar, A. (1992). *Nazrul kaibye Arbi-Parsi shabda*. Dhaka: Nazrul Institute.
- Sen, S. (1979). *History of Bengali literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi.

Citation: Shil. Dr. A., (2026) “Nazrul’s Writings as a Medium of Egalitarian Education”, *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-4, Issue-03, March-2026.