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The Philosophical Methods of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya and M. M. Roy: A Critical Review

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Abstract: As observed, history encompasses the evolution of eras or generations, the adoption of ideological approaches, and the significance and interpretation of the ideas they express. It is indeed the case that political, religious, and economic elements can shape the future trajectory of a nation. Nevertheless, it is challenging to identify the underlying outcomes (whether positive or negative) of these approaches that may influence a country. The current study investigates the philosophical methodologies adopted by the distinguished modern Indian humanist and political thinker, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. Additionally, it also explores M.N. Roy's philosophical stance. By thoroughly analysing the philosophical writings of both Roy and Deendayal, this paper seeks to delve into their contributions to Indian philosophy and political theory.

Keywords: Communist; Integral Humanism; Radical Humanism; Political Bias

Introduction

Manabendra Nath Roy, originally named Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, was an Indian revolutionary, activist, political theorist, and a prominent philosopher of the 20th century. Roy was instrumental in establishing the Mexican Communist Party and the Communist Party of India. He also participated as a delegate in various congresses of the Communist International and served as Russia's representative to China. After Joseph Stalin's rise to power, Roy distanced himself from mainstream communist movements to forge a path in independent revolutionary politics. In 1940, he played a key role in creating the *Radical Democratic Party*, where he was a prominent figure throughout the 1940s. Later, Roy shifted from Marxism to champion the 'Radical Humanism' philosophy. The uniqueness of Roy's philosophy lies in his effort to merge

Marxist concepts with humanistic principles, which he expressed through his idea of 'Radical Humanism.' He advocated for a revolutionary change in Indian society grounded in socialist ideals while supporting cultural and intellectual liberties. Throughout his life, Roy was actively involved in political activism, first as a patriot in the Indian Nationalist movement, and later in global socialist initiatives. His innovative blend of dialectical materialism with existentialism brought about a significant transformation in political thought. Roy's humanistic approach challenges established ideas related to socialism, nationalism, and classical humanism, establishing him as a prominent figure in the Indian enlightenment period. M. N. Roy's philosophical contributions hold considerable significance in the evolution of Indian philosophy and political theory for several reasons. His theory is often viewed as eclecticism. Eclecticism denotes choosing and integrating concepts, principles, or methodologies from various philosophical and intellectual traditions, rather than confining oneself to a singular school of thought. Roy recognized that striving to synthesize diverse influences within a structured framework frequently leads to a more comprehensive understanding. Thus, instead of adhering to a single philosophical doctrine, Roy's rich insights draw upon many traditions. His eclecticism enables him to amalgamate ideas from distinct philosophical schools, both Eastern and Western, in a way that can respond to the particular needs and challenges of Indian society. For instance, he combined Marxist tenets regarding class struggle and the results of historical materialism with Indian nationalist goals to present a version of socialism that resonates within the Indian context. Likewise, Roy's focus on individual liberty and self-determination illustrates how existentialist thinkers partly shape his vision for social change.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, an Indian forward-thinking leader, is notable for his contributions to modern Indian intellectual thought and practical action. He co-founded the *Bharatiya Jana Sangh*, which has significantly impacted India's political and cultural environment. He held the position of general secretary of the *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* for seventeen years before assuming the role of national president. Deendayal Upadhyaya's concept of Integral Humanism integrated spiritual and material principles, fostering social unity and self-sufficiency. Moreover, even after his death, this philosophy of *Integral Humanism* has emerged as a key ideological foundation for the BJS (now BJP). Upadhyaya presented the concept of integral humanism, which proposed a harmonious blend of spiritual principles and material development. He imagined a decentralized governance structure and an economy emphasizing self-sufficiency, focused on rural communities where local industries and sustainable methods are key components. His philosophy was deeply grounded in Indian cultural traditions, fostering social unity and economic independence. Moreover, his focus on self-sufficiency, small-scale industries, rural advancement, and cultural nationalism strongly aligns with the BJP's strategies and initiatives. Upadhyaya's support for a balanced synthesis of material and spiritual growth connects with modern dialogues surrounding sustainable development, holistic progress, and social equity. Through his *Integral Humanism* philosophy, Upadhyaya proposed a comprehensive approach to development that fosters harmony between material prosperity and spiritual fulfillment, deeply embedded in India's cultural values. His vision promoted

decentralization, self-reliance, and social equality, aiming to uplift marginalized communities.

The Philosophical Methods of M. N. Roy

M. N. Roy made important intellectual contributions through his writings detailing the fundamental principles of *Radical Humanism*. Among his notable works is 'India in Transition,' which analyzes the socio-political transformations in India; 'The Historical Role of Islam,' which investigates the influence of Islam on history and society; and 'New Humanism: A Manifesto,' where he presents his philosophy of *Radical Humanism*. Additionally, he authored 'Reason, Romanticism and Revolution' and 'The Humanist Way,' in which Roy elaborated on concepts such as human dignity, rationalism, democracy, and social justice. These writings reflect his profound engagement with political theory, history, and social reform.

Roy's philosophy emphasized the importance of rationalism and scientific thinking in tackling social issues. He opposed dogma, superstition, and authoritarianism, advocating for decision-making based on reason, evidence, and critical analysis. *Radical Humanism* champions a society that values and utilizes scientific methods and rational evaluation to address problems and make sound choices. Roy critiqued the Marxist focus on economic determinism and class struggle, arguing that it overlooked the importance of ideas, ethics, and individual agency in effecting social change. Roy's *Radical Humanism* aims to rectify these limitations by integrating a wider array of human motivations and societal transformation, highlighting the significance of ethical values, personal accountability, and economic considerations. It promotes decentralized and participatory democracy, where power is distributed among different societal levels and individuals actively influence the decisions that affect their lives. This model underscores the necessity for inclusive political processes that empower citizens and foster transparency and accountability in governance.

As a radical humanist, Roy adopted a human-centred philosophy that categorically opposed all forms of slavery, insisting on the importance of human freedom. He promoted a communal social growth model, where communities established themselves in designated regions for agriculture and social structuring. Roy supported radical democracy, ensuring every citizen had a voice and was informed regarding governmental matters. He dismissed the parliamentary system in favor of political parties, viewing them as entities that misused government power.

However, Roy's philosophy focused entirely on materialism, followed by scientific advancements. He did not subscribe to metaphysical beliefs and understood the importance of learning from the scientific advancements of modern society. He was convinced that science could solve all questions concerning humanity, the environment, the cosmos, and other elements of existence. He viewed human history as the quest for human freedom, motivated by human thought. The *Radical Democratic Party*, founded by M.N. Roy in India, was rooted in its commitment to democratic socialism, prioritizing humanist values over the strict doctrines of Marxist orthodoxy.

Although M.N. Roy criticized traditional Marxist socialism, he recognized the need for social and economic reforms to combat inequality and exploitation. His *Radical Humanism* acknowledged that addressing significant wealth and opportunity gaps was essential for creating a just society. To achieve this, Roy proposed a model of cooperative socialism, where economic activities would be structured cooperatively rather than controlled by the state or private capitalism. This approach aims to guarantee an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, fostering a collaborative economy where communities unite for shared prosperity. By prioritizing collaboration over rivalry, Roy intended to reduce economic disparities and promote social justice in alignment with his humanistic beliefs. Roy advocated for a reorganization of society's economy to dismantle systems of exploitation. He envisioned a humanistic political approach focused on purification and rationalization. Roy argued for the citizens' right to protest against dictatorship, advocating for non-violent methods. He believed that revolutionaries should possess scientific knowledge, as it instills confidence in people to reconstruct the world. Thus, Roy highlighted the significance of moral principles in the present, which should be based on scientific understanding and approach.

Roy's philosophy advocates for educational reforms to foster a scientific mindset and critical thinking skills. He believed that education should enable individuals to think for themselves and engage positively in the development of society. By encouraging a rational and analytical approach to learning, Roy sought to equip individuals to make meaningful contributions to societal progress. His vision of cooperative socialism involved structuring economic activities through cooperative enterprises in which workers and communities participate in decision-making and equitably share the outcomes. This model aims to promote economic fairness and lessen inequality by ensuring that the benefits of economic activities are fairly distributed among those involved in production and decision-making. *Radical Humanism* advocates decentralizing political authority, promoting local self-governance, and participatory democracy. By motivating local communities to engage in governance actively, Roy's philosophy strives to ensure that political choices reflect the needs and desires of the populace. This methodology enhances accountability and participation, fostering a democratic process that is more inclusive and representative. Disenchanted by the authoritarian aspects of Soviet-style communism, M.N. Roy ultimately distanced himself from traditional Marxism. This transition led him to formulate his philosophical approach, *Radical Humanism*. His criticism of the Soviet model, which he perceived as increasingly oppressive and contrary to the principles of genuine socialism, compelled him to explore an alternative path.

The Philosophical Methods of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya

The philosophy of Integral Humanism significantly influences Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideas. He believes authentic progress requires harmonizing economic growth with cultural and spiritual development. Upadhyaya's perspective goes beyond simple economic advancement; it asserts that development should enhance individuals and society in all aspects, fostering a balanced and fair progression. A key element of

Upadhyaya's thinking is his notion of cultural nationalism, highlighting the necessity of anchoring national identity in cultural heritage. He contended that India's ancient cultural traditions should be maintained and honoured, rather than eclipsed by modern influences. This cultural nationalism is fundamental to his political ideology, promoting a nationalism deeply connected to India's historical and cultural values.

Upadhyaya's political philosophy highlights the importance of social integration and harmony. He aimed to eradicate social issues like caste discrimination and untouchability, advocating for a society where every person is treated with equality and respect. He encouraged justice, collaboration, and integration among various social groups, striving for a unified and fair society. The approach of integral humanism prioritizes the individual in development initiatives. Upadhyaya imagined the state supporting comprehensive development, with policies and governance rooted in ethical and moral principles. This perspective calls for a style of governance that is transparent, ethical, and committed to the well-being of all citizens, ensuring that political leaders and institutions work for the common good. He also proposed the idea of decentralizing power, endorsing democracy based on Indian cultural traditions. He firmly rejected the use of violence to achieve objectives. Integral Humanism promotes a decentralized and self-sufficient economic model, providing an alternative to Western capitalism and Eastern socialism. Upadhyaya contended that economic policies should serve local communities and encourage sustainable development, rather than funneling wealth and power into the hands of a few. The philosophy supports the growth of small-scale industries and the improvement of rural areas, stressing that local economies are better equipped to address the needs of their communities. Consequently, the state must plan,

He imagined economic advancement parallel to the enhancement of human values, aiming for the progress of both individuals and society, while promoting strong national cohesion and self-sufficiency. Consequently, his economic framework represents an alternative, centrist approach. This ideology, also called Ekatma Manav Darshan, reflects a facet of Indian philosophy. It is important to emphasize that a core tenet of Integral Humanism is the unification of diverse sections of society, promoting harmony and collaboration among various social groups. Upadhyaya highlighted the necessity of confronting and eliminating social issues such as untouchability and caste discrimination. The philosophy advocates for a society rooted in equality and justice, where everyone can contribute and reap the benefits of collective advancements.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya critiqued both capitalist materialism and Marxist socialism, claiming that each ideology fails to consider human existence's spiritual and cultural aspects. Capitalist materialism, centered on economic profit and consumerism, frequently neglects individuals' inner, spiritual requirements. Conversely, Marxist socialism, while addressing economic disparities, often ignores the significance of cultural and spiritual development. Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism underscores the idea of Swadeshi, which promotes using locally produced goods and services to encourage self-reliance and lessen dependence on foreign economies.

It is essential to note that the origins of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's concept can be traced to the ancient Indian heritage and the cultural framework of integral

humanism, which is derived from the principle of *Dharma*. Upadhyaya posits that each nation possesses a unique culture and society, which is essential for developing political ideology. In his thesis, he discusses four essential components of an individual: body, mind, intelligence, and soul. These components align with the four cosmic objectives of *dharma* (moral duties), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (desire), and *moksha* (salvation). Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's notion of *Integral Humanism* represents a comprehensive philosophy highlighting the interrelation of the individual, society, nature, and the divine. At its essence, *Integral Humanism* acknowledges the complex nature of human existence. He envisioned a harmonious and balanced interaction among these diverse facets of human life, leading to a cohesive and integral whole. This philosophy is grounded in the vision of a classless and casteless Indian society, where social hierarchies and conflicts are diminished. The fundamental principles of Integral Humanism encompass: (a) *interconnectedness*, which acknowledges the intrinsic links between the individual, society, nature, and the divine; (b) *holism*, which embraces the complex nature of human existence and fosters balanced interactions among different life aspects; (c) *classless and casteless Society*, which aspires to eliminate social hierarchies and discrimination; and (d) *conflict-free Social Order*, which seeks to establish a harmonious and peaceful social environment, where conflicts are reduced and resolved through cooperation and mutual understanding.

It is important to emphasize that Christophe Jafferlot examines the appeal of the Hindutva ideologues towards the Varna system and Deendayal Upadhyaya's principles of Integral Humanism. For these ideologues, the Varna system served as a framework for social cohesion that all castes, including the 'untouchables', could embrace. Jafferlot notes that "Upadhyaya held similar convictions, asserting that the organic unity of the Varna system is a fundamental aspect of his Integral Humanism philosophy, which *Sangh Parivar* leaders regard as the foundation of their ideology. In 1965, he articulated that in our understanding of the four castes, they correspond to the various limbs of Virat-Purusha, the primordial man whose sacrifice, as described in the Rig Veda, led to the formation of society through the Varna system.' He believed the Varna system possessed an organic unity capable of supporting the nation-building process." ¹ Additionally, Pralay Kanungo, an academic from Delhi, shares comparable views, stating: "Deendayal Upadhyaya enhances Golwalkar's cultural nationalism with his Integral Humanism theory (*Ekatma Manavavad*). This new theory introduces sophistication to the RSS's concept of Hindu Rashtra and deepens its ideological foundations." ²

Conclusion and Observation

It can be observed that both M.N. Roy and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya have made substantial contributions to the evolution of Indian philosophy and political theory for various reasons. Roy's work is particularly noteworthy for its endeavour to merge Marxist principles with the aspirations of Indian nationalism. In contrast to Upadhyaya's philosophical stance, Roy's framework embodies a distinctive amalgamation of Eastern and Western ideals. Conversely, Upadhyaya criticized the Western method of comprehending life, which he perceived as disjointed and

segmented. He contended that while analyzing in parts may benefit specialists, it lacks practicality from a humanistic viewpoint. Upadhyaya attributed the disarray in Western thought to its inclination to fragment life into isolated segments, with Western philosophers providing partial solutions that overlook the interconnectedness of human experiences. He proposed that a holistic culture could resolve the myriad challenges of human existence. The principles of unity in diversity and the expression of diversity in any form remain fundamental to Bharatiya culture.

M. N. Roy's philosophical writings exemplify a blend of synthesis and originality in his method of philosophical exploration. His work integrates philosophical ideas and concepts from diverse traditions, such as Marxism, Indian philosophy, existentialism, and pragmatism, to formulate his distinctive philosophical viewpoint. While Roy's eclectic approach and his involvement in political movements may prompt some philosophers to question the depth or rigor of his contributions, the lasting significance of his ideas and their influence on philosophical discourse indicate that his work constitutes a notable and enduring legacy within the philosophical community. Ultimately, Roy's method of synthesizing multiple theories reflects his dedication to addressing contemporary social and political challenges through philosophical inquiry, showcasing the capacity of philosophy to engage with real-world issues and foster meaningful change. For instance, his examination of Indian nationalism and colonialism through a Marxist lens provides a fresh interpretation of historical and social phenomena that contrasts with traditional nationalist narratives or Marxist perspectives. Likewise, his concept of Radical Humanism embodies a creative amalgamation of Western philosophical thought and Indian intellectual traditions, presenting a unique approach to tackling social justice and human liberation questions. The implications of Roy's synthesis and originality for his reputation within the philosophical community are multifaceted. On one hand, his skill in merging diverse philosophical ideas and applying them to tangible political and social matters has garnered him recognition and influence in both Indian and international philosophical circles. His contributions have significantly impacted broader discussions in philosophy, politics, and social theory, motivating future generations of thinkers and activists.

It is noteworthy that Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideology was heavily influenced by the visions of Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi, particularly in his emphasis on Swadeshi economic policies that embody nationalist values, Indian culture, and belief systems. His ultimate aim was to strengthen India through Bharatiyakaran or Indianization. Following Mahatma Gandhi, he stands out as one of the few prominent Indian thinkers of modern times who highlighted the importance of indigenous knowledge systems. His philosophy of Integral Humanism critiques communism and capitalism, presenting a synthesis of individual and collective, as well as material and spiritual aspects. Integral Humanism proposes a unique Indigenous perspective on social and economic development, deeply embedded in India's cultural heritage and philosophical traditions. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's intellectual framework does not conform to any singular school of thought, nor is it derived from Western philosophies; instead, it arises from a comprehensive exploration of

alternatives to capitalism, communism, and socialism. His vision lays out fundamental concepts for India's advancement, stressing the necessity for a development model reconciling tradition with modernity. In the 21st century, India has increasingly adopted Upadhyaya's philosophy, especially regarding self-reliance, cultural integrity, and sustainable development. Integral Humanism offers a thorough blueprint for societal advancement, concentrating on the balanced development of individuals and communities. This philosophy is equitable and deeply rooted in indigenous thought frameworks, highlighting the integration of spiritual and material well-being for societal upliftment. His ideas shape India's identity and influence its policies across various sectors. Hence, even today, his philosophy continues to serve as a foundational principle for nurturing a fair, independent, and culturally rich nation.

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