

## Analysing the Doctrine of Integral Humanism of Deendayal Upadhyaya: An Evaluation

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### ABSTRACT

Deendayal Upadhyaya's philosophy of Integral Humanism represents a distinctive socio-economic perspective rooted in Bharatiya cultural values. This framework reaffirms the rightful position of humanity and seeks to cultivate a well-rounded personality. Integral humanism advocates for a dignified existence for all individuals; it also aims to promote the sustainable use of natural resources, and fosters political, economic, and social democracy and freedom, while also celebrating diversity. To realize these aims, this doctrine of Upadhyaya underscores three fundamental principles: the supremacy of dharma, the supremacy of the whole, and the autonomy of society. This paper attempted to evaluate how Upadhyaya emphasized the importance of self-analysis in alignment with indigenous cultural values, which asserted that Bharatiya culture prioritizes the development of the body, mind, intellect, and soul.

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### I. Introduction

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya may not have been regarded as a towering intellectual figure among the Indian great personalities, but he demonstrated a notable skill in embedding widely held biases and speculative notions within the vibrant context of what he referred to as 'Bharatiya culture.' He is recognized as the ideological founder of the Bhartiya Jana Sangh, which later evolved into the Bharatiya



Janata Party (BJP). His profound contributions not only established the foundational principles of this political organization but also reflected his social philosophies, thereby elevating his influence beyond the realm of politics. Born on September 25, 1916, in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh, Upadhyaya exhibited academic brilliance from an early age, and was a man of many qualities.

Updhyaya's foray into politics began at the age of 21 when he became a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1937. During this time, he met MS Golwalkar, who served as his mentor and significantly influenced his ideological development. His article entitled 'Akhand Bharat: Objectives and Means', reflected his aspiration for a cohesive India that rises above identity-based separations, a perspective that faced considerable criticism from the Congress party. He regarded culture as the fundamental core of nationalism, categorically opposing the idea of multiculturalism. He contended that true national unity or integration cannot be achieved unless all individuals participate in a singular cultural stream. He maintained that the preservation of Indian nationalism necessitates a cohesive cultural base. He aimed to develop a political philosophy that harmonizes with both nature and Bharatiya culture, while also facilitating comprehensive national development. As a result, he introduced the concept of Integral Humanism.

## **II. Analysing the Doctrine of Integral Humanism: An Evaluation:**

The philosophy of Integral Humanism, articulated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, initiates a critical examination of the socio-economic and political frameworks adopted by the Indian government following independence from British colonial rule. It raises the question of whether the government, under Jawaharlal Nehru, has embraced an appropriate model for development. Upadhyaya contemplates whether India should align itself with contemporary development paradigms rooted in Western ideologies, revert to ancient models reflective of the period prior to foreign domination, or cultivate a unique socio-economic and political framework that is indigenous to India. He advocates for the latter, proposing Integral Humanism as a distinctly Indian approach to development. Upadhyaya dismisses both the Western and ancient models, providing rational arguments for his stance. Concerning the ancient model, he contends that, regardless of its potential desirability, its adoption is impractical due to the irreversible nature of time. He asserts that Indians must endeavor to reconstruct their lives to effectively navigate contemporary challenges. Therefore, he introduces a new developmental philosophy grounded in the rich cultural values of Bharat.



Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya critiques Western and foreign ideologies, asserting that they are not inherently universal. He argues that these ideologies are constrained by the specific cultural contexts from which they emerge, stating that many of these concepts have become outdated. In his view, Western political philosophy has embraced ideals such as democracy, nationalism, socialism, and universal unity. However, he contends that these ideals are often incomplete and can be contradictory. For instance, nationalism has historically incited conflicts between nations, which in turn has contributed to broader global tensions. He points out that the pursuit of world unity often necessitates the suppression of nationalism in favor of universal brotherhood, while proponents of nationalism dismiss world unity as an unrealistic aspiration, prioritizing national interests instead. Similarly, he highlights the challenges in reconciling socialism with democracy; while democracy promotes individual freedom, this freedom can be exploited within capitalist frameworks, leading to monopolistic practices. Conversely, socialism, intended to eliminate exploitation, can undermine individual freedom and dignity. Deendayal characterizes Marxism as a regressive rather than a scientific and practical solution to the issues confronting the nation. He observes that individuals are left in a state of confusion, struggling to determine the appropriate path for future advancement. He asserts that the West lacks the authority to claim that its philosophical framework is the sole correct approach, as it too is in a state of uncertainty. Thus, he concludes that merely emulating Western thought represents a misguided endeavour, akin to a blind individual being led by another.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya emphasized that each nation possesses a unique historical, social, and economic context. He believed it as imperative for their leaders to determine appropriate solutions to the challenges faced by their countries, taking into account their specific backgrounds. It is illogical to assume that the strategies devised by leaders in one nation will yield the same effectiveness in others. Thus, it is neither feasible nor prudent to implement foreign ideologies in India in their unaltered forms. While Deendayal advocated for the use of indigenous knowledge and wisdom to address domestic issues, he also acknowledged the potential value of adopting external wisdom under certain circumstances. He articulated that “we must absorb the knowledge and gains of the entire humanity so far as eternal principles and truths are concerned” (Upadhyaya,1992:23). He argued that concepts originating within our society should be modified to suit contemporary realities, while those acquired from other cultures must be tailored to fit our specific conditions. In his view, leveraging Bharatiya culture allows for the reconciliation of various ideals found in Western political thought, which would provide us with a significant advantage.



Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya emphasizes the significance of Bharatiya culture due to its holistic perspective. This viewpoint perceives life as an interconnected entity. He argues that the confusion prevalent in Western thought stems from its inclination to compartmentalize life into distinct sections, subsequently attempting to reassemble them in a fragmented manner. While acknowledging the existence of diversity and plurality in life, Indian culture strives to uncover the underlying unity that binds these elements together. It is viewed as the fundamental coherence of all existence. Even dualistic philosophies recognize the complementary nature of spirit and matter amidst diversity. The unity inherent in a seed manifests in various forms—roots, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits—each exhibiting distinct characteristics yet maintaining a relational unity through their common origin. The concept of unity in diversity, along with the expression of this unity in myriad forms, remains a pivotal theme in Indian culture. If this principle is embraced wholeheartedly, it can eliminate the potential for conflict among different forces. Conflict is not indicative of culture or nature; rather, it signifies a deviation from them.<sup>1</sup> The notion of “survival of the fittest,” recently articulated in the West, was already acknowledged by our philosophers. They identified negative tendencies such as lust and anger among the six inferior aspects of human nature, yet these were not regarded as the foundation of civilized life or culture.<sup>2</sup> It is crucial to protect ourselves and society from these detrimental elements, as they cannot serve as ideals or standards for human conduct. The principle of survival of the fittest belongs to the realm of nature.<sup>3</sup> Civilizations have emerged not from this law but from efforts to minimize its impact on human existence. To achieve progress, we must keep the history of civilization in perspective.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya argued that mutual cooperation exists abundantly in the world, paralleling the prevalence of conflict and competition. Just as flora and fauna sustain one another, human beings rely on vegetation for oxygen, while simultaneously providing carbon dioxide essential for plant growth. This reciprocal relationship is fundamental to the sustenance of life on Earth. Recognizing this interdependence among various life forms and using it as a foundation for fostering a mutually supportive human existence is a defining characteristic of civilization. He articulated that shaping nature to fulfill social aspirations constitutes culture; however, when this natural inclination leads to social discord, it is termed perversion. Culture does not disregard or negate nature; rather, it cultivates those aspects of nature that promote life within the universe. Moreover, culture enriches nature while mitigating elements that threaten or undermine life. For example, animals, like humans, exhibit social relationships but often overlook their inherent natural connections. In contrast, humans leverage these



natural relationships to establish a more harmonious societal order, weaving the community into a cohesive entity of cooperation. This process gives rise to a diverse array of values and traditions, which subsequently inform societal standards of morality. Principles that contribute to the preservation of human life can thus be identified as foundational for a civilized society.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya also posited that human nature encompasses two distinct sets of tendencies: on one side, there are anger and greed, while on the other, love and sacrifice. These tendencies coexist within the human experience. Anger and greed are inherent to both humans and animals. In fact, if an individual allows anger to dictate their life and organizes their actions around it, the outcome will be a dissonance in their existence. This leads to the imperative to "not succumb to anger." Even when feelings of anger emerge, individuals possess the capacity to regulate these emotions, and they should strive to do so. Thus, self-control should serve as a guiding principle in life rather than succumbing to anger. Certain principles governing human relationships are not constructed but rather uncovered through experience. These principles are adhered to due to their practical benefits. For instance, when one experiences anger, it is essential to manage it effectively, and honesty should be upheld in interactions with others. Such ethical principles constitute dharma, or the law of life, within Bharatiya society. The term dharma encompasses principles that foster harmony, peace, and progress in human life. Therefore, based on dharma, individuals should engage in a comprehensive analysis of existence. When nature is aligned with the principles of dharma, it gives rise to culture and civilization. This culture is vital for the sustenance and elevation of human life. In this context, dharma is interpreted as law, and Deendayal Upadhyaya contended that the term religion does not accurately reflect the essence of dharma. Thus, an integrated life serves not only as the foundation and core principle of Bharatiya culture but also embodies its aspirations and ideals.

Pandit Deendayal further articulated that the components of the body, soul, intelligence, and mind collectively constitute an individual. These elements are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation. In contrast, Western perspectives tend to treat each aspect of human existence independently. "In a nation like America, individuals often experience confusion and discontent, lacking both tranquility and joy" (Upadhyaya, 1992: 30). This predicament arises from a failure to recognize the concept of an integrated human being. In Bharat, it is asserted that the advancement of an individual signifies the concurrent development of the body, soul, mind, and intellect. It is frequently claimed that Bharatiya culture emphasizes solely the salvation of the soul, neglecting other dimensions, which is a misconception. The focus on the soul is indeed a distinctive feature of Bharatiya culture. Over time, this



has fostered the belief that Indians are preoccupied only with spiritual matters, disregarding other aspects of human existence.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's view on Bharatiya posits that traditional Indian thought does not neglect the physical body while emphasizing the importance of the soul. The Upanishads assert that an individual who is physically frail cannot attain self-realization. The body is fundamentally the most crucial instrument for fulfilling the duties associated with Dharma. There exists a fundamental contrast between Indian and Western lifestyles. The objective of Western philosophy is primarily to fulfill the material needs and desires of the body. In contrast, the Indian perspective views the body as a means to achieve broader goals. While the fulfillment of physical needs is acknowledged as essential, Indian philosophy does not regard it as the ultimate purpose of existence. According to Indian culture, an individual is expected to fulfill four primary responsibilities that cater to the needs of the body, intellect, mind, and soul, aiming for holistic development. These responsibilities are encapsulated in the four purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha, which represent the pursuits appropriate for human beings. The aspirations for Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha are inherent to humanity, and their fulfillment brings joy. Indian philosophy advocates for an integrated approach to these four pursuits. Although Moksha is regarded as the highest of the purusharthas, the pursuit of Moksha in isolation is not deemed beneficial for the soul. Conversely, an individual who engages in actions while remaining detached from the outcomes is believed to attain Moksha more swiftly. Artha encompasses political and economic strategies, historically including justice, punishment, and economic considerations. Kama pertains to the fulfillment of various natural desires. Dharma encompasses the rules, fundamental principles, and ethical codes that govern the activities related to Artha and Kama, ensuring that these pursuits are conducted in a manner that promotes integrated and harmonious development, ultimately leading to Moksha.

According to Deendayal, the concepts of Dharma, Artha, and Kama are interconnected and serve to complement one another. Dharma plays a crucial role in the pursuit of Artha, as it is essential even within the realm of business. The absence of Dharma undermines the ability to generate wealth. It is important to acknowledge that Dharma is fundamental in the quest for both Artha and Kama. Deendayal emphasized that the people of Bharat adhere to Dharma not solely as a means to acquire Artha, but because it represents a foundational principle of a civilized existence. Furthermore, Kama can only be pursued through the lens of Dharma. Dharma serves to moderate human instincts, enabling individuals to discern what is truly valuable as opposed to merely pleasurable. Thus, Dharma occupies a central



position in our cultural framework. The practice of Dharma cannot occur without the presence of Artha. A pertinent saying illustrates this point: “What sin will not be committed by one who is starving? Those who have lost everything become ruthless” (Upadhyaya, 1992:33). This highlights that sufficient wealth can reinforce the practice of Dharma. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the government to maintain law and order, as chaos undermines Dharma. In times of disorder, the law of the jungle prevails, where the strong prey upon the weak. Thus, the stability of the state is essential for the sustenance of Dharma.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya asserted that both the lack and the overwhelming presence of Artha can lead to societal and individual ruin. When Artha is pursued as an end rather than a means, it results in the acquisition of power solely through Artha. Various immoral actions may be undertaken in the quest to amass Artha. Individuals who possess an abundance of wealth often find themselves in a state of comfort. The detrimental influence of Artha manifests when individuals fail to comprehend its appropriate application. However, this influence is exacerbated in contexts where secondary forms of Artha, such as currency and consumer goods, are excessively available. It is essential to distance oneself from such influences. To mitigate the impact of Artha, it is crucial to cultivate strong character, promote idealism, enhance education, and establish appropriate economic frameworks. For Deendayal, Artha encompasses a broad spectrum, including the political dimensions of life. The concept of Danda-niti warns that excessive state power poses a threat to Dharma, as the state’s authority can encroach upon the rightful domain of Dharma. In such circumstances, Dharma suffers and diminishes under a tyrannical state that monopolizes both political and economic power. This leads to a societal reliance on the state for all needs. Therefore, it is imperative to prevent the state from usurping the roles of Dharma and society. He also equated Kama with Artha and Dharma, asserting that the advancement of Dharma necessitates attention to both physical needs and desires. The practice of Dharma becomes untenable in the absence of basic sustenance. Furthermore, if the fine arts, which enrich the human spirit, are entirely disregarded, the civilizing influence on individuals will diminish, leading to moral decay and neglect of Dharma. Thus, Kama must be pursued in harmony with Dharma.

### **III. Conclusion:**

This paper posits that the philosophy of Integral Humanism articulated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya emphasizes the necessity of placing the human being at the center of social, economic, and political development models. Upadhyaya advocates for the creation of an indigenous development framework,



rejecting the adoption of models from Western or Eastern contexts. In this indigenous approach, the individual is viewed holistically, with a focus on the balanced development of the body, mind, intellect, and soul. Human endeavours are directed towards fulfilling diverse human desires while ensuring that the pursuit of different aspirations does not lead to conflict. This holistic perspective encapsulates the fourfold ambitions of an individual, presenting the ideal of a complete and integrated human being as both a goal and a guiding principle. Upadhyaya's philosophy transcends mere political discourse; it represents a synthesis of socio-economic and political viewpoints rooted in Bharatiya—Indianness, advocating for a harmonious relationship among society, the state, and the nation, which should function as complementary rather than contradictory entities.

**Conflicts of Interest:** We have no conflict of interest.

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