

---

## **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism for Contemporary Bharat: Its Relevance in Modern Period**

**Pukhrambam Julia Chanu**

Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Manipur University.

**L.Biswanath Sharma**

Professor, Department of Philosophy, Manipur University.

\*Corresponding email: pukhrambamjuliachanu@gmail.com

---

### **ARTICLE DETAILS**

**Research Paper**

**Accepted: 14-02-2025**

**Published: 14-03-2025**

**Keywords:**

*Artha, Dharma, Moksha,  
Westphalian, Integral,  
Anand.*

---

### **ABSTRACT**

The study clarifies the ways in which Integral Humanism can influence contemporary policy-making and social initiatives. As we saw that ideas significantly contribute to societal transformation, the doctrine of Integral Humanism is a notable example of this. The paper posits that Upadhyaya's philosophy offers a solid framework for tackling pressing issues and the decline of ethical standards in public affairs. It calls for a reassessment of Upadhyaya's ideas, illustrating their potential to significantly enrich modern discussions on development, ethics, and governance. Ultimately, the paper also highlights the relevance of Integral Humanism in promoting a balanced and comprehensive approach to current societal challenges, advocating for a vision of development that is both inclusive and sustainable.

---

**DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15030646>**

---

### **Introduction:**

The philosophical thoughts of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (September 25, 1916 - February 11, 1968) presents a persuasive framework for achieving sustainable and inclusive development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a period marked by economic disparities, environmental challenges, and a widespread feeling of ethical confusion. Unfortunately, the Nehruvian State, along with its approach to cancel culture,



systematically marginalized and labelled numerous Indian intellectuals as communal, despite their contrary positions. Notable Indian figures such as Aurobindo, Tilak, Ambedkar, Savarkar, and Deendayal Upadhyaya were unjustly excluded from mainstream discourse without thorough examination of their ideas. It has become an imperative to rectify this bias perpetuated by the Left and Woke ideologies, necessitating a comprehensive study of the contributions made by these Bharatiya thinkers to foster an alternative narrative. These individuals were the organic intellectuals who spearheaded a countercultural revolution.

In India, the concept of Integral Humanism was introduced by Deendayal Upadhyaya, a prominent figure in the Indian political landscape. As noted by Shantishree (2024), numerous thinkers such as Aurobindo, Tilak, Ambedkar, Savarkar, and Upadhyaya himself have often been marginalized without thorough examination. Upadhyaya was a founding member of the Jan Sangh. Madhav (2021) observed that Upadhyaya's philosophy bears a close resemblance to that of Gandhi. Like Gandhi, Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism is rooted in the ancient traditions and cultural values of India. The philosophical framework of Integral Humanism was influenced by Indian society, particularly the concept of Dharma. Upadhyaya possessed a profound understanding of the political ideologies of his time, and he critiqued the limitations of Both liberalism and socialism in promoting individual welfare. He emphasized the significance of the individual while also addressing economic considerations. Thus, Integral Humanism embodies a belief in the interconnectedness of the individual, society, and the universe, with an ultimate allegiance to a supreme authority. Upadhyaya introduced indigenous concepts, one of which is the notion of the nation. He asserted that "Every nation has its own cultural and societal ideas," which he termed *Chiti*, and that each society possesses unique characteristics identifiable as *Virat*. Every individual plays a distinct role and engages in various activities within society. The core of Integral Humanism lies in the integration of diverse aspects of human existence into a cohesive whole. Thus, the study aims to explore the ideological components of Integral Humanism and its significance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, it should be noted that the concepts embodied in 'Integral Humanism' are derived from Deendayal Upadhyaya's extensive experience over the years.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya is often regarded as one of the most overlooked thinkers within the realm of Indian political philosophy. He stands out as a unique intellectual figure following Gandhi, drawing upon the rich heritage of ancient Indian knowledge and culture (Sharma & Nain, 2018). His profound intellect and comprehensive understanding of concepts such as capitalism and communism enable him to provide a reasoned critique of both, while proposing an Indian alternative. His concept of Integral



Humanism presents a framework for addressing the complexities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Kumar (2023) notes that Upadhyaya's ideas serve to connect integrated and multifaceted approaches to conceptualizing a post-independence India. Integral Humanism emphasizes societal development that transcends mere materialism. Upadhyaya aims to formulate an Indian response to the detrimental ideologies originating from Europe. Concurrently, Europe experienced a growing discontent with these ideologies. French philosopher Jacques Maritain, recognized as a foundational figure in Christian Democratic movements, authored a book titled "Integral Humanism" in 1936, three decades prior to Upadhyaya's contributions. In this work, Maritain articulated his theory of integral humanism against the backdrop of the emergence of totalitarian regimes such as fascism, Nazism, and communism. His primary focus is on the individual. Abraham (2019) highlights that Maritain emphasizes the necessity of integrating spiritual and material dimensions, critiquing both capitalism and communism for their failure to enable the complete realization of an individual's humanity. And, regarding the significance of Integral Humanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Sharma(2018) and Nain (2018) noted that despite the considerable contributions of Deendayal Upadhyaya, there exists a scarcity of academic discussion regarding his philosophical and ideological perspectives, as well as an evaluation of his achievements. In this context, it is essential to explore and analyse these aspects further.

### **Integral Humanism and Its Critique of Western Ideas:**

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya formulated the concept of 'Integral Humanism' to resolve conflicts among individuals in the spheres of politics, religion, and economics. His philosophy represents a synthesis of socio-economic and political perspectives, emphasizing Bharathiyatha or Indianness, with the objective of harmonizing individual existence with the collective society, state, and nation. Integral Humanism underscores that the core of human life is found in achieving equilibrium across various dimensions, including physical, mental, and intellectual health, while fostering a sense of equality and accountability among individuals, families, communities, and nations. Each component is interdependent, ensuring that none exists in isolation. The philosophy of Integral Humanism, as articulated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, remains pertinent today as it advocates for the welfare of all within the Indian tradition, addressing contemporary societal challenges and offering an indigenous viewpoint. Upadhyaya's interpretation of Integral Humanism creatively recontextualizes ancient Indian traditions within the framework of post-independence society, highlighting the disparities between capitalist and socialist ideologies and striving to propose a native approach to living.



Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya critiques those who advocate for the adoption of Western lifestyles and ideologies as the foundation for India's advancement, noting that such foreign concepts arise from specific historical contexts and trends. These ideas are not universally applicable; they reflect the distinct characteristics of the nationality, nature, and culture of Western nations. Furthermore, many of these concepts have become obsolete over time. The theories of Karl Marx, for instance, have evolved significantly in relation to their temporal and geographical contexts. Thus, if one were to merely memorize Marxist analysis and apply it uncritically to the Indian context, it would not constitute a scientific or rational methodology, but rather a form of stereotyping. Deendayal asserts that "Each nation possesses its unique historical, social, and economic circumstances, and it is the responsibility of its leaders and intellectuals to chart a course for progress based on those specific conditions. It is misguided to assume that the solutions proposed by one nation to address its challenges can be directly transferred to another society facing different realities" (Upadhyaya, 2020, p.80).

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya perceives *dharma* as the fundamental principle that should steer all facets of society, politics, and personal conduct. He believes it regulates *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*, with *moksha* being the outcome of altruistic actions aligned with *dharma*. Furthermore, it governs economic endeavors, upholds justice, and oversees administration. In the realm of governance, he regards the excessive concentration of political and economic authority as contrary to moral obligations, implicitly critiquing communist regimes and questioning the inclinations towards state-controlled democratic socialism. Broadly, Upadhyaya associates the prevalence of power, such as economic monopolies, with corrupt and adharmic practices.

Deendayal Upadhyaya emphasizes the distinctive features of Indian culture, asserting that it encompasses a holistic understanding of life and the entirety of creation. He posits that this cultural perspective is inherently integrated. While he acknowledges that a fragmented approach may be beneficial from an expert's standpoint, he contends that it falls short in practical application. He identifies the primary challenge faced by the West as their tendency towards disjointed thinking regarding life, which they then attempt to unify artificially. Although we recognize the diversity present in life, our consistent endeavor has been to uncover the underlying unity. This pursuit is fundamentally scientific, as it mirrors a scientist's quest to derive order from the apparent chaos of the world, to discern its principles, and to establish corresponding behavioural guidelines.



Deendayal Upadhyaya illustrates how chemists have identified fundamental elements within the physical realm, asserting that all phenomena extend beyond these elements. He emphasizes the existence of a deeper power, namely consciousness, which underpins these elements globally. Furthermore, Deendayal refers to the four components of an individual: body, mind, intellect, and soul. These components are interconnected, making it impractical to consider them in isolation. The confusion prevalent in Western thought stems from their tendency to analyze each aspect of humanity separately. As articulated by Deendayal, “During the movement for a democratic structure, it was asserted that man is an apolitical animal, necessitating attention to political aspirations. Why should one individual be a king while others remain subjects? Everyone should have the opportunity to govern. To appease this political being, the right to vote was granted. However, while this right was conferred, other rights were simultaneously diminished. This raises the question: Voting is commendable, but what about sustenance? What if there is a lack of food?” (Upadhaya, 2020,p.88). In the context of human development, each element holds equal significance, which is a fundamental aspect of *Bharatiya* culture that perceives life as an integrated whole. While analyzing components may have its merits, it proves impractical in real-world applications. Deendayal Upadhyaya critiques the Western concept of the survival of the fittest, referring to it as the “*Law of the jungle.*” He posits that beyond mere physical and mental well-being, intellectual fulfilment is paramount. According to him, if both the body and mind are content yet intellectual clarity is absent, it equates to a form of madness.

Upadhyayaji strongly argued that Western ideas are not universal. While figures such as Chanakya and his work “*Arthashastra,*” along with the philosophies of Vivekananda and Dayanand Saraswati’s *Arya Samaj*, receive some acknowledgment, they represent only a small fraction of the vast landscape of Indian thinkers and philosophers. The prevailing discourse often exhibits a Western-centric bias, which tends to obscure the rich political philosophies that have originated from the East. In the aftermath of Independence, discussions surrounding political thought have significantly diminished, with an overwhelming emphasis on Nehruvian ideology that frequently eclipses Gandhian principles. This situation has prompted some observers to express concern over the “*poverty of Indian political theory.*” Nevertheless, the struggle for Independence saw a resurgence of philosophical and political ideas rooted in the ancient traditions of *Sanatan Dharma*. The contributions of notable figures such as Lajpat Rai, Bose, Tilak, Bipin Chandra, Savarkar, Bharatiyar, Golwalkar, Aurobindo, R.C. Majumdar, and Shyama Prasad Mukherji profoundly influenced society and the Indian consciousness, playing a crucial role in energizing the Independence Movement at the grassroots level.



What rendered these ideas particularly compelling was their basis in the realities of India and their strong ties to the historical traditions and cultural values of *Bharat*. Deendayal Upadhyaya's "*Integral Humanism*" is a notable contribution that reinterpreted *Bharatiya* traditions within the framework of modern political systems, highlighting India's political philosophy as well as the integration of traditional values with contemporary political thought.

### **Contemporary Relevance of Integral Humanism as an Indian Philosophy:**

The concepts presented in "*Integral Humanism*" are derived from Deendayal Upadhyaya's extensive experience, particularly his involvement with Jan Sangh and his engagements with various individuals during the period from 1959 to 1964. This led to the development of a philosophy that is distinctly Indian, intricately linked to the national rejuvenation movements aimed at shaping the future of India as a nation, society, and as part of the broader human community. Although Upadhyaya's ideas were cut short by his premature death, they laid down foundational principles of thought that continue to hold significant relevance today. Central to this philosophy is the rejection of dialecticism and the integration of *Vyasthi* (individual), *Samasthi* (society), *Srishti* (creation), and *Parameshthi* (Creator). These principles transcend mere philosophical discourse and extend into the political arena. The aspirations of a nation and its society should be rooted in the balanced pursuits of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*. This necessitates a reflective analysis of the past, exploring the rich philosophical, political, and social heritage of India, including the insights of figures such as *Shankaracharya*. In this context, Upadhyaya's perspectives highlight the significance of civilizational and cultural nationalism, asserting that these ideas predate Western notions of Westphalian statehood. The concepts originating from the West, whether aligned with conservative or liberal ideologies, are fundamentally based on dichotomies of in-group versus out-group. These ideas primarily focus on the distinctions and conflicts between two contrasting elements: the individual versus the collective, nature versus humanity, and spirituality versus secularism. The rigid nature of these concepts forces individuals and adherents to make a choice between two opposing positions, a notion that becomes inadequate when one examines Indian history in detail.

Moreover, contemporary discussions surrounding capitalism versus socialism and welfare versus utilitarianism are also deeply rooted in this binary mindset. In this important work, Upadhyaya encourages us to transcend the individualistic and dialectical conclusions that are often promoted by Western thought. Instead, he advocates for the integration and inclusion of these varied themes and



perspectives into a cohesive framework, where the church and state can coexist in harmony under the principle of *Dharma*. The aim is to achieve a sense of wholeness, counteracting notions of alienation and division, and uniting the experiences of the spiritual and the physical realms. The aspiration to emulate the West in its most unadulterated form represents a perilously misguided tendency. The perils associated with wokeness and unrestrained liberal ideologies are propelling the West toward a chasm of unfathomable depth. Core traditional values related to family, community, marriage, and societal cohesion are being sacrificed at the altar of individualism, which conceals a retreat from personal accountability in favour of self-indulgence and identity politics. This shift has engendered conflicts and heightened polarization, leading to an alarming increase in societal violence.

Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism presents a viable remedy to these urgent challenges. His concept of harmonizing nature with development, along with the integration of individual rights and responsibilities with societal and national obligations, offers a profound framework for living a life that is both meaningful and advantageous to the community. It is essential that we do not abandon our religious and spiritual principles in favor of a secularism that is devoid of faith. In India, what is often misconstrued as secularism is not a true separation of religion from politics, but rather a manifestation of misunderstanding and ignorance regarding religion. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize the role of humanity within the broader context of existence and to understand how individuals should behave to cultivate a society and nation that is both inclusive and progressive.

The Imperative is not centred on a conflict between humanity and nature; rather, it is a pursuit of harmony. This understanding is reflected in the reverence afforded to rivers, mountains, and all organic elements, which are regarded as deities. Ancient wisdom acknowledged their significance and majesty in sustaining human life, highlighting that our actions are inextricably linked to our environment. It is essential that our endeavors align harmoniously with our ecosystem, where material progress is sought with respect, alongside a commitment to spiritual growth. Besides, the widespread Issues of alienation and disenchantment that pervade various aspects of human existence today serve as troubling indicators that necessitate earnest and unified action. The philosophy of Integral Humanism provides a framework for achieving this equilibrium and harmony. The integration of Vyasthi, Samasthi, Srishti, and Parameshti offers a pathway forward. A modern revolution in Indian consciousness is emerging as we recognize and embrace our rich historical traditions and cultural heritage. It is imperative that we propagate these ideas and further develop them to guide us toward a form of enlightenment that transcends mere materialism and individualism, embracing a spiritual journey filled with '*anand*'.



## Conclusion

Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism presents a comprehensive and cohesive framework that is particularly pertinent in tackling the diverse challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This philosophy, which underscores the harmonious advancement of both individuals and society, surpasses the confines of communism and capitalism by incorporating ethical, cultural, and spiritual aspects into economic and social strategies. In a time characterized by economic inequality, environmental crises, and a widespread moral decline, Integral Humanism offers a balanced perspective that values both material prosperity and ethical growth. The examination of Integral Humanism within this study has highlighted its capacity to shape modern policy-making and social programs. By promoting an economy that aligns with the overarching objectives of human development and societal harmony, Upadhyaya's vision advocates for sustainable and inclusive progress. It also stresses the significance of ethical governance and social equity, fostering a framework where individual rights coexist with collective responsibilities.

Furthermore, the emphasis of Integral Humanism on cultural grounding and spiritual advancement provides essential insights for nurturing social unity and resilience in a world that is increasingly divided. By leveraging India's rich philosophical traditions, Upadhyaya's concepts challenge the dominant materialistic and individualistic frameworks, calling for a more compassionate and integrated approach to development.

In summary, revisiting Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism uncovers a thorough and flexible philosophy capable of effectively addressing contemporary global issues. As we navigate the complexities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, adopting the principles of Integral Humanism can lead us toward a more just, sustainable, and ethically sound society. This study emphasizes the necessity of reassessing Upadhyaya's ideas, showcasing their lasting significance and ability to make a substantial impact on modern discussions surrounding development, ethics, and governance.

**Declaration:** We have no choice conflict of interest. Grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their feedback and support.





**Reference:**

1. Kumar. U. (2023) Contribution of Deendayal Upadhyaya in Social Consciousness and Nation Building. *Journal of Nambian Studies*, 33(1).
2. Upadhyaya, D. (2020). *Integral Humanism: An Analysis of Some Basic Elements*. Prabhat Prakashan.
3. Kumar, S. & Nain, A. (2018). Integral Humanism of Deendayal Upadhyaya and its contemporary Relevance. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 79(1), 13-20.
- Thengadi, D.B. (1973): "His Legacy: Our Mission", Jayabharath Publication, Kallai Road, Calicut.
4. Nene, V.V. (2016): "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya: Ideology and Perception: INTEGRAL HUMANISM", Suruchi Prakashan, New Delhi.
5. Das, H. H. (2015): "Indian Political Thoughts", National Publishing House, Jaipur and New Delhi.
6. Sharma, S. R. (2008): "Life and Work of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya", Published by Book Enclave, Jaipur.