

Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism

Mantu Kumar,

M.A. in History from University of Delhi.

Email id.- mantu.mk48@gmail.com

Abstract

Integral humanism research offers insights on the development of society beyond materialistic aspects, highlighting the importance of factors such as the difference between individual and state needs and healthy competition. It emphasizes a synergy between character, society, and the universe, guided by the supreme authority. According to Upadhyaya, every nation has its unique cultural and societal concept, known as Chiti, and peculiarities, identified as Virat. His proposed concept is rooted in history, aimed at addressing current challenges and future possibilities. This article focuses on Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya's idea of achieving self-reliance through integral humanism, which has significant relevance for India's political vision and global opportunities.

Keywords

Integral Humanism, Democracy, Communism, Socialism, Advaita Vedanta, Philosophy, Spiritual

Introduction

Deendayal Upadhyaya, a strong nationalist, revived ancient Indian political concepts that are still relevant today. He believed that his ideas were not new, but rather rooted in India's culture and traditions. His philosophy of "Integral humanism" aimed to reconstruct the nation by emphasizing the principle of total existence and promoting synthesis in individual and societal life. This philosophy is significant in modern political thought because it applies intellectual and moral concepts to politics. Deendayal stressed that politics should serve the nation's interest and not the personal gain of a select few. He not only presented philosophical ideas but also practical ways to implement them by adhering to tradition. Integral Humanism maintains society based on Dharma, the laws of virtue that promote the collective growth of individuals, families, society, and the state. The concept of Dharma applies not only to individuals but also to society, the state, and the nation at large.

Inspiration Behind Deendayal's Integral Humanism

According to Upadhyaya, Integral Humanism was in line with the Advaita Vedanta tradition propagated by Adi Sankara. He argued that non-dualism served as the unifying force that binds together all objects in the universe, including humanity. Upadhyaya saw this as a fundamental aspect and a significant contribution to Indian culture.

Impact of Modern Different Political Philosophies

The political philosophies of the Modern period originated from rebellion against theocratic Papal States and gave rise to democracy, socialism, communism, and capitalism. These ideologies were developed in response to prevailing socio-economic-political conditions of that era, and people became dogmatic adherents to them. Unfortunately, these philosophies only exacerbated conflicts within society. Humans possess remarkable mental abilities, capacities, and capabilities, which have led to the emergence of numerous significant ideas for human life on Earth. However, the contemporary political philosophies have reduced humans to the status of animals by promoting concepts such as the "the survival of the fittest" or the laws of the jungle.

India After 1947

During British Imperial rule in India, politics became an integral part of common people's lives, and many movements and organizations emerged to resist the oppressive rule of the British. Leaders such as Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Vinayak Damodhara Savarkar, and Mahatma Gandhi tried to unite people under the banner of India's rich culture and tradition to fight against foreign rule. They believed that political freedom based on our culture would be stable and enduring. Unlike the freedom struggles of some other nations, India's struggle for independence was based on culture, proving that our country is rooted in culture, tradition, and a glorious past. The feeling of "one nation" among our people was not based on political concepts, but rather the idea that "we as a nation are one, not many". This was the real contribution of leaders like Tilak and Gandhi. After independence, Nehru, whose political philosophy was rooted in ideas foreign to India, took centre stage in Indian politics. He, along with others sharing his political views, did not analyse India's own political concepts but instead copied and implemented the systems of politics and governance prevalent in the West. This resulted in problems such as social inequality, economic disparity, and increasing dependence on the government. The scholar believes that the Nehruvian political system is not suitable for our nation and that the concept of

Socialist Democracy of Nehru needs to be rejected completely. An alternative indigenous political philosophy is “Integral humanism” voiced by Indian politician Deendayal Upadhyaya. It is rooted in ancient Indian wisdom, adapted over time by our forefathers and witnessing continuity in our ever-lasting long traditions, which has always accepted and adapted to changes in society.

Deendayal as a Visionary

Deendayal Upadhyaya, who was the leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), presented his main political philosophy called “Integral humanism” during the party conference in Mumbai in 1968. Although the phrase “Integral Humanism” was initially used by Indian Freedom Fighter Bipin Chandra Pal in 1921, Upadhyaya provided a detailed explanation and gave it a specific meaning. His philosophy is based on the idea of dharma, the ancient and time-tested way of life that can be applied to individuals, society, and the nation. Upadhyaya did not claim that his philosophy was new but rather emphasized its importance for the world to understand. He did not completely reject western political concepts but argued that a uniform solution cannot be applied to all cultures, unlike the Nehruvian political thought.

Significance of Integral Humanism in Contemporary Times

Deendayal Upadhyaya's political philosophy is deeply rooted in Indian culture and traditions, and therefore, it should not be given a religious connotation. Some scholars who were educated in English and followed Western thinkers had misunderstood and misinterpreted Indian concepts, such as the definition of “Hindu” as a religion instead of a way of life and national identity, and “Dharma” as religion instead of the sustenance of life. With a proper understanding of these concepts, Deendayal's philosophy provided profound inspiration to a nation that had been subjugated by alien rule for centuries and had lost its ancient nationhood, which is inherently Hindu and based on ancient Indian values and way of life rooted in Dharma. This philosophy can be applied not only in politics but also in other aspects of life, such as social, economic, and cultural spheres. Deendayal studied various socio-politico-economic theories and their impact on different nations, which led him to ponder on India's own way of life and find solutions to present-day conflicts. Instead of the conflicts and struggles presented by Western philosophies such as communism and capitalism, Deendayal believed in a fusion of struggles and peace

that can be achieved through specific practices. He sought to find an everlasting solution to the conflicts of humanity.

Dharma : The Foundation of Indian Society

Deendayal Upadhyaya presented Integral Humanism as a solution to conflicts in human life, emphasizing the need for harmony and complementarity between individuals, society, state, and nation. It is not just about synchronization of body, mind, and intellect, but also about the sharing of duties and rights, from human-to-human, individual-to-family, family-to-village, family-to-society, and society-to-nation. The concept of Dharma, which means laws of virtue, is rooted in Sanskrit along with its implementing elements of Purushartha, which include Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha, meaning laws of virtue, wealth, desire, and heaven.

Integral Humanism 'The Bharatiya Way'

Deendayal presented 'Integral Humanism', which emphasizes the synchronization of all aspects of human life, including duties and rights shared among individuals, families, villages, society, and nation. This philosophy is based on the Sanskrit concept of 'Dharma' which encompasses virtue, wealth, desire, and heaven. The Indian national identity is rooted in 'Sanatan Dharma' and is referred to as the 'Hindu Rashtra' bound by Dharma. Deendayal stressed the importance of national reawakening and cultural unity, which is the basis of existence as a nation. He advocated for a political system that serves the nation rather than personal interests, and presented a system of de-centralized administration called 'janapada' that was successfully implemented by Gandhi in the Indian National Congress organization. However, this system was rejected by then administrators who believed that politics was the ultimate factor in society and country.

Convergence and Divergence of Deendayal and Gandhi

The philosophy of Integral Humanism seeks a culturally authentic approach to modernization that upholds Hindu values. It encompasses Gandhian themes of morality in politics, swadeshi, and small-scale industrialization, with a distinctly Hindu nationalist perspective. These ideas center around harmony, cultural-national values, and discipline. The relevance of Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism lies in its emphasis on the welfare of all in the Indian tradition and its attempt to address contemporary societal issues from this perspective. Upadhyaya examined global thought and offered an indigenous

alternative that could transform conflict resolution and nation-building. Despite his significant contributions to academia, there has been limited academic discourse on Upadhyaya's ideas, making it essential to analyse his life and ideas within their social context to understand his perspective fully. Upadhyaya's philosophy fills the gap in multidimensional attempts to envision India's future in the post-Independence era. It is a well-organized body of thought inspired by universal values from India's perennial tradition of thinking. Upadhyaya emphasizes the need to synchronize traditional culture with modern democratic institutions and underscores the importance of dialogue.

Ideas

A. Good Governance

In terms of governance, Deendayal views the excessive accumulation of political and economic power as going against Dharma, which could be seen as an indirect critique of communist governments and a challenge to state-centred democratic socialism. Overall, he links the domination of power, including economic monopolies, to unethical and non-Dharmic behaviour.

B. Views on Federalism

1. The constitution permits the establishment of discriminatory rights based on factors like religion, caste, province, and language.
2. He believes that such rights go against the fundamental principles of Dharma, which advocate for the inherent equality and unity of all individuals.
3. He supports a unified constitution that grants executive and decision-making power to lower levels of societal structure, such as village panchayats and regional states.

C. Secularism and Freedom to Practice Religion

1. Upadhyaya asserts that religious freedom should be limited if it harms the freedom of individuals belonging to other religions.
2. The message is evident for religions that claim exclusivity, and urgent measures need to be taken to prevent their intrusive behaviour.
3. He highlights that in India, secularism was defined as opposing theocracy, and Dharma was wrongly associated with the latter.
4. Unfortunately, it has degraded into a complete lack of intellectual depth and political nonsense, serving only to rationalize the violence of monotheistic religions.

D. Constitution of India

1. The parliamentary system in India, adopted from Westminster, has amplified every active and latent social, political, linguistic, religious and supposed ethnic division and fissure in India.
2. A system of governance with a President, adequate protections and decentralization would have reduced these risks.

E. Views on Economy

1. According to Upadhyaya, Nehruvian economic policies and industrialization were rejected due to their uncritical adoption of Western ideas, disregarding India's cultural and spiritual heritage (Dwivedi, 2020).
2. Upadhyaya believes that a balance between Indian and Western thinking is necessary given the dynamic nature of society and India's cultural heritage (Dwivedi, 2020) [5].
3. The Nehruvian model of economic development promoted consumerism in Indian society, emphasizing rapid industrialization and material wealth.
4. This approach to development has created social disparities, regional imbalances, and failed to reduce poverty in the country.
5. Similar to Gandhism, Integral Humanism opposes uncontrolled consumerism as it is incompatible with Indian culture.
6. Traditional Indian culture advocates restraining desires and promoting contentment instead of an unbridled pursuit of material wealth.

Arguments around Integral Humanism

Integral Humanism is a worldview created by Deendayal Upadhyaya that rejects the idea of inherent differences based on race, colour, caste, or religion, and instead sees all individuals as part of one organic whole with a shared national consciousness. This holistic ideology emphasizes the development of individuals and society, focusing on moral and spiritual growth in addition to material progress. Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism advocates the pursuit of four purusharthas, which include Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. The state is responsible for providing Dharma, Artha, and Kama, while individuals must achieve Moksha through their own efforts. True happiness, according to this philosophy, comes when wealth is earned and used in a way that is consistent with Dharma's guidelines. Upadhyaya also believed that society is a natural living organism

with a distinct national spirit, and that the social organism's needs are similar to those of individuals. Integral Humanism promotes morality in politics and swadeshi, as well as small-scale industry in economies, all of which are based on Gandhian themes but are distinctly Hindu nationalist. This philosophy is essential to resolving many of the world's issues and promoting harmony and respect among individuals, society, animals, environment, and nature.

Contemporary Connection

Climate Issues : Integral Humanism advocates for the alignment between humans, nature, and spirituality, a principle reflected in the climate action goal of SDG Goal 13. Integral Ecology emphasizes the traditional concept of interdependence with nature, rejecting the distinction between humans, animals, and plants. In an integral framework, the environment is considered a global common good, and therefore, it is the shared responsibility of all humanity to protect it. The Sanskrit shloka "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" which translates to "the entire world is my family" emphasizes the Advaita philosophy's belief that we are all interconnected globally in our challenges and opportunities.

Harmony : The principles of Satya and Purushartha emphasize the importance of action without attachment to outcomes. They promote brotherhood and discourage animosity between individuals, nations, and sub-national groups. These principles have relevance in areas such as peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG Goal 16), cooperative federalism, and panchsheel. The concept of oneness, which embraces people of all races, castes, creeds, geographies, and genders, is fundamental to the interpretation of integral frameworks on an international level. The integral doctrine aligns perfectly with modern democratic notions and the United Nations and is arguably the oldest framework for human rights.

Culture : According to these principles, the repression of innate human desires can lead to deviant behaviour. Natural forms of nourishment, music, art, and other creative expressions are essential for the progress of civilization. In today's interconnected world, preserving and promoting cultural diversity is vital, and these artistic expressions play a significant role in achieving that goal.

Governance : The concept of Artha suggests the middle path, which advocates for neither overly harsh nor too lenient policies towards violators. These principles can serve as the

foundation for good governance, economic reforms, corporate governance, and security doctrines in India.

Fighting Against Corruption : In the philosophy of integral humanism, honesty is not just a matter of policy, but a fundamental principle. It is imperative to promote transparency in governance, ensure accountability of leaders and bureaucrats, and introduce significant electoral reforms.

Global Order : In terms of global affairs, this doctrine is not based on utilitarianism and does not prioritize the progress of one nation over another. Instead, it emphasizes the importance of identifying with both one's nation and the rest of humanity to achieve peaceful co-existence. It should be noted that this idea of collectivism is not in opposition to the notion of prioritizing one's nation. Integral Internationalism strikes a balance between the need to protect one's nation from violent threats and the responsibility to contribute to international security.

Reducing Inequality : Integral Humanism upholds the principles of creating and distributing wealth, which are executed through various social schemes like MGNREGA and taxation to benefit the vulnerable sections of society. The doctrine advocates for equal rights to all, rooted in the interconnectedness of all life forms. This approach is not only democratic but also promotes the cause of social justice and equal opportunities, including for the most marginalized sections of society, also known as "Antyodaya".

Conclusion

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya advocated that India could not progress by relying solely on Western principles such as individualism, democracy, socialism, communism, and capitalism. He believed that modern technology and science should be embraced, but tailored to India's needs. He differentiated between Western science and the Western way of life, stating that slavish imitation of the West should be rejected. He also advocated for the adoption of the Dharma Rajya concept, which is duty-oriented and recognizes no individual or body as sovereign. Upadhyaya's goal was to establish desirable goals for Indian society and the intellectual and spiritual foundations for achieving them. Despite the current trend towards neoliberalism, his political theory remains largely unchallenged, and researchers should take its broad objectives seriously to preserve India's national identity.

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