

## THE INTEGRAL HUMANISM: PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYA

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### **Abstract**

*The philosophy of integral humanism is a profound philosophical framework that reinterprets the essence of ancient Indian thought, encapsulated in the concept of Vasudeva Kutumbakam (The world is one family). This paper critically examines Upadhyaya's advocacy for an indigenous development model in Bhartiya, deeply rooted in the cultural values of the country. This paper identifies the guiding principles of Integral Humanism and examines its strengths, weaknesses, and relevance in contemporary India.*

### **Keywords**

*Integral Humanism,  
Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya,  
Ancient Indian Thought,  
Advaita,  
Western Capitalism,  
Marxist Socialism,  
Indigenous Development Model.*

### **1. Introduction**

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, a prominent figure in Indian politics, played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of the country. Born in 1916 near Farah in Mathura District, Upadhyaya aligned himself with the right-wing Hindutva ideology propagated by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). His unwavering commitment to this ideology led him to devote himself full-time to the RSS in 1942. During his tenure, Upadhyaya initiated the monthly publication *Rashtra Dharma* in the 1940s, which served as a platform for disseminating the principles and values of Hindutva ideology. This publication played a crucial role in spreading the ideology and garnering support for the RSS. Upadhyaya's influence within the political sphere reached its pinnacle when he became the president of the Jana Sangh in December 1967. This position allowed him to further promote his ideological beliefs and shape the party's agenda. One of Upadhyaya's most significant contributions was the formulation of "Integral Humanism," a comprehensive ideological framework. This framework emphasized the integration of spiritual, social, and economic aspects of human life, aiming to create a harmonious society. In 1965, the Jan Sangh officially adopted Integral Humanism as its official doctrine, solidifying Upadhyaya's influence within the party. However, Upadhyaya's life was tragically cut short under mysterious circumstances near the Mughal Sarai Junction railway station (presently Known as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Junction) in February 1968. His untimely demise left behind a legacy that continues to shape and influence Indian political discourse. Today, Upadhyaya's ideas and principles continue to resonate with many, and his contributions to Indian politics are still celebrated. His dedications to the Hindutva ideology and his formulation of Integral Humanism have left a lasting impact on the political landscape of India. The notion of life as an integrated whole is consistent with ancient Indian thought, as evidenced in philosophical texts such as the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and *Bhagavad Gita*. These texts emphasize the interconnectedness of all aspects of existence, advocating for a harmonious balance between individual well-being and the welfare of society and the cosmos. This worldview permeated various aspects of Indian civilization, including art, architecture, governance, and social organization. Deendayal Ji's assertion about the fundamental characteristic of Bhartiya culture as viewing life as an integrated whole represents a profound philosophical insight with significant implications. Rooted in ancient wisdom, this concept remains relevant in contemporary times, inviting us to reassess our understanding of existence and adopt a holistic approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all life forms. By incorporating these principles into our actions and institutions, we can strive for a more harmonious and sustainable world. Sutapa Lahiri said in her essay that 'The party adopted the Deendayal Upadhyay's concept of Integral Humanism which emphasises the significance of a complete man comprising of body, soul and intellect. Individuals constitute society and a good system should try to satisfy the needs of an individual, material and spiritual and non-material. Nationalism and the individual in a nation should be the deciding factor in a political system. He advocated democracy, yet opposed to both capitalism and communism.' Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay's philosophy of integral humanism serves as the guiding light for indigenous socioeconomic thought in Bhartiya, deeply rooted in the cultural values of the country. This philosophy emphasizes the comprehensive advancement of human beings, advocating for a holistic approach to individual and societal development. It redefines humanity's place in the world, striving to foster complete personalities and ensure dignified lives for all. Central to integral humanism is the recognition of the interconnectedness of all aspects of existence. Rather than viewing humanity in isolation, it emphasizes

the importance of considering the whole, encompassing individuals, communities, and the environment. This worldview underscores the need for the sustainable consumption of natural resources, acknowledging our responsibility to preserve the planet for future generations. Integral humanism also champions the principles of political, economic, and social democracies and freedom. It recognizes the intrinsic value of diversity, advocating for inclusive societies in which every individual can thrive, regardless of their background or circumstances. Integral humanism emphasizes three key principles to achieve these overarching objectives. First, it upholds the supremacy of the whole, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all elements within society. The Hindu philosophy of integral humanism advocates for the supremacy of dharma, recognizing the importance of ethical and moral principles in guiding human behavior and societal organization. It also emphasizes the importance of trusteeship, stressing the need to act responsibly and sustainably in our use of resources. Deendayal, a key figure in the post-independence era, argued passionately for India to chart its own course of development rather than blindly adopt Western models. He urged a critical examination of our cultural roots, asserting that indigenous traditions hold valuable insights into fostering holistic human development. At the heart of Bhartiya culture lies a profound focus on nurturing the body, mind, intellect, and soul in unison and encapsulating the essence of integrated humanism. By embracing these cultural tenets, integral humanism offers a roadmap for sustainable, inclusive, and dignified progress grounded in the rich tapestry of India's heritage. This calls upon us to forge a path that honors our past while building a brighter future for all. In his lecture, he said that 'The first characteristic of Bhartiya culture is that it looks upon life as an integrated whole. It has an integrated viewpoint. To think of parts may be proper for a specialist, but it is not useful from a practical standpoint. The confusion in the West arises primarily from its tendency to think of life in sections and then attempt to put them together by patchwork. We do admit that there is diversity and plurality in life, but we have always attempted to discover the unity behind them. This attempt is thoroughly scientific. Scientists always attempt to discover order in the apparent disorder in the universe, to find out the principles governing the universe, and to frame practical rules based on these principles. Chemists discovered that a few elements comprise the entire physical world.' Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism is a profound philosophical framework that reinterprets the essence of ancient Indian thought, encapsulated in the concept of Vasudeva Kutumbakam (The world is one family). This essay explores how Integral Humanism emphasizes society's responsibility for the welfare of each individual, recognizing the interconnectedness and interdependence among all members, thereby fostering a harmonious and prosperous community. Integral Humanism is rooted in the ancient Indian concept of Vasudeva Kutumbakam, which highlights the unity of mankind. Deendayal reinterpreted this concept by emphasizing the interconnectedness of individuals within society. He introduced the idea of complementarity in which each member is essential for the survival and prosperity of the whole. This interconnectedness is demonstrated in the traditional Indian societal structure in which professions complement each other's needs, reflecting a symbiotic relationship. Integral Humanism advocates decentralized governance, as manifested in the Panchayati Raj system. As an independent and self-reliant unit, the village embodies the principles of Integral Humanism. Within the Panchayati Raj framework, the welfare of every individual, including Antem Viakthi, the last man, is considered paramount. This system fosters community cohesion and ensures equitable distribution of resources, reflecting the ethos of Vasudeva Kutumbakam. He explicitly told that 'We have thus considered the life of an in a thorough and integrated manner. We have set the aim of developing body, mind, intellect as well as soul in a balanced way. We have tried to satisfy the manifold aspirations of man, taking care that efforts to satisfy to different aspirations are not mutually conflicted. This is an integrated picture of a complete human being; an integrated individual is both our goal as well as our path.'

In a formal tone, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya highlighted the spiritual foundations of Integral Humanism, criticizing Western philosophies for their materialistic perspectives. He contends that spiritualism is necessary to comprehend human behaviour and the interrelationship between humans and cosmos. Integral Humanism combines spiritual values with practical realism and presents a comprehensive structure for ethical behaviour and societal organization. Integral Humanism balances idealism and realism by anchoring its principles in the practical realities of society. Although it upholds Bhartiya Sanskriti as its guiding ideal, it recognizes the importance of transforming these ideals into actionable programs rooted in realism. This pragmatic approach ensures that Integral Humanism remains relevant and effective in addressing contemporary challenges while staying true to its philosophical roots. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism offers an engaging reinterpretation of ancient Indian thought, emphasizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals within society. Integral Humanism provides a comprehensive framework for ethical Kutumbakam behaviour and societal organization by integrating spiritual values with practical realism. Through concepts such as Vasudeva and Panchayati Raj, Integral Humanism promotes social harmony, equity, and collective welfare, thereby providing valuable insights for addressing contemporary challenges and fostering a more inclusive and compassionate society. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's advocacy for a native development model that prioritizes human beings presents a unique ideological stance within the discourse of Indian socioeconomic development.

Upadhyaya's perspective departs from the predominant paradigms of Western capitalism and Marxist socialism by emphasizing the importance of cultural identity and human values. This paper critically examines Upadhyaya's vision and assesses its strengths, weaknesses, and relevance in contemporary India.

Upadhyaya's call for a native development model places human beings at its core and challenges the prevailing emphasis on material progress. His proposition underscores the significance of cultural rootedness and community cohesion in fostering holistic development. By prioritizing human dignity and social harmony, Upadhyaya sought to address the multifaceted dimensions of human well-being beyond mere economic indicators. Upadhyaya's critique of Western capitalism and Marxist socialism reflects a nuanced understanding of their limitations. He contends that Western capitalism, with its emphasis on individualism and profit maximization, tends to undermine social solidarity and spiritual value. Similarly, he criticizes Marxist socialism for its mechanistic approach to human affairs, which often neglects cultural diversity and individual aspirations. Upadhyaya's rejection of these ideologies stems from his belief that they are incompatible with the ethos of Indian society. Contrary to his scepticism towards Western ideologies, Upadhyaya adopts a receptive stance towards Western science. He acknowledged the importance of scientific advancements in improving living standards and enhancing human welfare. However, he advocated for a judicious integration of Western scientific knowledge within the framework of indigenous values and traditions, emphasizing the need for a culturally sensitive approach to development. While Upadhyaya's indigenous development model offers a compelling alternative to Western paradigms, it faces several challenges. The ambiguity surrounding the operationalization of indigenous values and the potential clash with modernization processes pose significant hurdles. Moreover, the practical feasibility of harmonizing traditional values with modern developmental imperatives remains uncertain. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's advocacy for an indigenous development model represents a significant contribution to the discourse on Indian socio-economic development. His emphasis on human-centeredness, cultural authenticity, and integration of Western science offers a holistic vision of national progress. However, the practical realization of this vision necessitates careful negotiation between tradition and modernity while addressing the complexities of contemporary challenges. As India navigates its developmental trajectory, Upadhyaya's insights continue to resonate, provoking critical reflections on the path to inclusive and sustainable development.

Deendayal's outlook on the consequences of Westernization on Indian society and the Marxist assessment of capitalism and socialism present thought-provoking critiques that warrant deliberate consideration. Deendayal Ji contends that the British colonial administration in India instigated a cultural and ideological supremacy that led to the adoption of Western values and norms at the expense of native traditions. He posits that this cultural subjugation endures even after the cessation of colonial rule, as Westernization is still perceived as a sign of progress. Moreover, Deendayal Ji elucidates the covert nature of this influence, which extends beyond scientific disciplines to encompass social, economic, and political doctrines. Deendayal Deendayal's assertion emphasizes the persistent legacy of colonialism, where the imposition of Western ideals not only subverted native cultures but also engendered a feeling of inferiority among colonized populations. This analysis resonates with postcolonial scholars, who argue that colonialism perpetuated systems of domination and cultural obliteration, leaving indelible marks on the psyche of colonized societies. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that Deendayal Deendayal's critique of Westernization might also reflect a nostalgic yearning for a romanticized past, overlooking the complexities of cultural exchange and hybridity that often characterize historical interactions between civilizations. Furthermore, Deendayal Deendayal's juxtaposition of Westernization with nationalism raises pertinent questions about the nature of progress and identity in post-colonial societies. While resistance to colonial rule may have been framed in nationalist terms, the subsequent embracing of Western ideals complicates the notions of cultural authenticity and sovereignty. The recurring theme of the tension between tradition and modernity is central to postcolonial discourse, reflecting the ongoing struggle to reconcile historical legacies with contemporary aspirations for development and global integration. In his Marxist analysis of capitalism and socialism, Ji critiques exploitative economic structures and advocates for collective ownership of the means of production as a solution to social inequality. By drawing from Marx's dialectical materialism, he highlights the inherent contradictions within capitalism and its inevitable downfall. However, Deendayal's portrayal of socialism as a panacea for societal ills overlooks the complexities of its implementation and the challenges posed by authoritarian regimes that claim to represent the proletariat. Marxist theory, with its influence and controversy, has shaped political movements and academic discourse worldwide. While Marx's critique of capitalism continues to resonate with contemporary critiques of neoliberalism and global inequality, the historical failures of Marxist regimes raise doubts about the feasibility of achieving a classless, stateless society. Additionally, the concentration of power in the hands of a vanguard party, as advocated by Marxist-Leninist regimes, has often led to repressive regimes and the suppression of dissent. Deendayal's critique of Westernization and Marxist analysis offer valuable insights into the challenges facing postcolonial societies and the quest for social justice. [6] By examining the cultural hegemony of the West and the exploitative nature of

capitalism, they shed light on the enduring legacies of colonialism and economic inequality. However, it is essential to critically engage with these perspectives, recognizing the limitations and complexities of social change. Only through a nuanced understanding of history and ideology can we navigate the complexities of contemporary society and strive toward a more just and equitable world.

Upadhyaya's assertion concerning the alignment of Integral Humanism with the Advaita tradition pioneered by Adi Sankara warrants critical examination. He posits non-dualism as a unified principle that permeates the universe, including humanity, but it is necessary to assess the theoretical and practical implications of such a view. Upadhyaya overlooks the rich diversity and complexity of the philosophical heritage of India, announcing the essence and contributions of Indian culture only to non-dualism. In addition, his statements raise questions about the exclusion of alternative perspectives within Indian thinking that may provide different interpretations of human existence and social organization. A comprehensive examination of integrated humanism requires a nuanced understanding of its philosophical foundations and its wider socio-cultural implications, and transcends a single emphasis on non-dualism. Deendayal Upadhyaya's conceptualization of humanity positions a hierarchical organization of attributes encompassing the domains of body, mind, intellect and soul. This framework is closely linked to the four universal objectives described in Hindu philosophy, namely dharma (moral duties), artha (wealth), kama (worship or satisfaction) and moksha (total liberation or "salvation"). Through this schema, Upadhyaya explains a comprehensive understanding of human existence, each attribute corresponding and harmonizing to a different aspect of human pursuit and fulfillment. The alignment of the body with the dharma means the embodiment of moral duties and ethical behaviours, while the relationship of the mind with the Athes emphasizes the role of the intellect in the acquisition and management of material wealth. In addition, the connection between intellect and kama highlights the pursuit of desires and satisfaction through intellectual determination and determination. Finally, the soul's alignment with moksha encompasses the ultimate search for spiritual transcendence and release from the cycle of birth and death. The delineation of these attributes and their corresponding objectives by Upadhyaya provides a nuanced framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of human existence in the broader context of Hindu philosophical thought.

Integral humanism, as articulated by Deendayal Upadhyaya, is indeed remarkably similar to Gandhi's vision of India's future. Both ideologies advocate a unique track for India's development, one that rejects the materialistic aims emblematic of socialism and capitalism. Instead, they advocate the rejection of widespread individualism in modern societies and opt for a holistic approach based on the community principles of Varna-Dharma. In addition, both emphasize the need to incorporate religious and moral values into the political sphere and view such integration as essential for promoting a virtuous and ethical governance system. Furthermore, both Upadhyaya's integral humanism and Gandhi's vision promote a form of modernization deeply rooted in Hindu cultural values, seeking to preserve and maintain these traditions in the context of changes. The emphasis of institutional humanism on morality in politics and Swadeshi, as well as its defense of small industrialization, resonates deeply with Gandhian principles, embodying a common commitment to a socio-political and economic framework that places ethical governance and Indigenous economic empowerment at the forefront. In essence, the parallels between integral humanism and Gandhi's vision underscore the common aspiration of a morally founded, culturally authentic, and socially inclusive future for India. The philosophical framework of Integral Humanism, as elucidated by Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya during the early 1960s, is deeply ingrained in the ancient Indian tradition and cultural ethos. Its underlying principles are derived from the fundamental tenets of Indian society and dharma. Upadhyaya's critique of capitalist and communist ideologies highlights their inattention to humanitarian concerns and excessive concentration on materialistic pursuits. Therefore, Integral Humanism advocates for the integration of individual, societal, and cosmic elements, while recognizing the supreme authority of the divine. Upadhyaya's central thesis is the acknowledgment of each nation's unique "Chiti," or cultural and societal essence, and the identification of distinctive societal traits, referred to as "Virat." He aimed to integrate these diverse dimensions into harmonious coexistence by emphasizing the manifold roles and activities of individuals. Upadhyaya's formulation of this ideology during 1964-65 was a departure from the prevalent Western paradigms of secularism, individualism, and communism, which he deemed incompatible with India's cultural heritage. Contrary to the popular belief that India must adhere to Western ideologies, Upadhyaya proposed the development of an indigenous alternative rooted in Indian philosophical tradition. He viewed Western political thought's divisive approach to humanity, pitting individualism against socialism and nature against man, as misguided. Upadhyaya believed that Western ideologies, by prioritizing materialism over spiritualism, have disregarded essential aspects of human existence. The Bhartiya Jana Sangh and later the Bhartiya Janata Party have embraced integral humanism, which posits India as a civilization with a profound cultural legacy that pre-dates Western notions of the nation-state. This ideology advocates for a holistic understanding of India's future, drawing from its rich knowledge tradition. Unlike Western ideologies, which foster an antagonistic relationship between man and nature, integral humanism seeks integration and harmony,

as encapsulated in the concept of "Dharma." The principles of integral humanism were developed and propagated by Upadhyaya and his associates through various party conventions and ideological forums. In 1985, they were established as the foundational philosophy of the Bhartiya Janata Party. Integral humanism, therefore, represents not merely a juxtaposition of individual and societal interests, but a comprehensive vision of integration encompassing the individual, society, nature, and the divine. It is important to note that Western ideologies foster an antagonistic relationship between man and nature, while integral humanism seeks integration and harmony, as encapsulated in the concept of "Dharma." Additionally, integral humanism represents a comprehensive vision of integration encompassing the individual, society, nature, and the divine, rather than merely a juxtaposition of individual and societal interests. In summary, the philosophy of Integral Humanism, as explicated by Upadhyaya, presents a persuasive framework for fostering the holistic development of society. Through his teachings, Upadhyaya insightfully recognizes that individuals' aspirations exceed the dichotomy between capitalism and socialism. Instead, he advocates for a harmonious pursuit of development and happiness for integral humans. Central to Upadhyaya's philosophy is the idea of voluntary simplicity in private life combined with a commitment to utilizing one's skills and resources for the betterment of society. This approach emphasizes the importance of individual fulfillment alongside collective welfare, thereby promoting a balanced and sustainable societal ethos. Furthermore, Upadhyaya's advocacy for an undivided society underscores the notion that human concerns extend beyond economic ideologies. By prioritizing the integral human over rigid socioeconomic structures, he advocates for a more inclusive and compassionate approach to societal progress. In essence, Integral Humanism offers a nuanced perspective that transcends conventional paradigms, advocating the synthesis of individual fulfillment and collective well-being. As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, Upadhyaya's philosophy serves as a guiding light, reminding us of the intrinsic value of human dignity, harmony, and solidarity in shaping an equitable and prosperous society.

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