



# **Integral Humanism -An Introduction to Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya's Philosophy**

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## **Abstract**

This paper offers a comprehensive exploration of *Integral Humanism*, the political and philosophical doctrine articulated by Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya in the 1960s as an indigenous alternative to Western political ideologies. Rooted in ancient Indian cultural values and Vedantic philosophy, Integral Humanism emphasizes a holistic integration of the individual, society, nature, and the divine. Upadhyaya critiques the reductionism of both capitalism and socialism, arguing for a balanced framework that prioritizes *Dharma* (moral order) as the guiding force behind socio-economic organization. The doctrine conceptualizes human beings as a unity of body, mind, intellect, and soul, each corresponding to the four *Purusharthas*—Kama, Artha, Dharma, and Moksha. This paper examines Upadhyaya's views on governance, constitutional structure, federalism, secularism, and economic decentralization, demonstrating his emphasis on ethical governance, social harmony, and spiritual development. Drawing comparisons with contemporary thinkers and global ideological trends, the study situates Integral Humanism within broader postcolonial and Cold War discourses. It also reflects on its contemporary relevance in addressing India's developmental and ethical crises, aligning with the capability approach and inclusive growth models. Ultimately, the paper affirms Integral Humanism as a unique civilizational response to modernity, advocating for a spiritually grounded, culturally resonant model of nation-building.

**Keywords:** Integral Humanism, Deendayal Upadhyaya, Dharma, Purushartha, Vedanta, Indian political thought, ethical governance, postcolonial ideology, socio-economic development, indigenous philosophy

## **Introduction**

Integral Humanism, as conceived by Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, refers to the philosophical ideas proposed by the Jan Sangh leader in the early 1960s. The ideological contours of Integral Humanism stem from ancient Indian traditions and cultural ethos. The philosophical foundations of Integral Humanism were shaped by the core principles of Indian society and Dharma. Upadhyaya adeptly critiqued the social and political philosophies of both capitalism and communism by highlighting their disregard for humanitarian aspects and their disproportionate focus on financial dimensions. Integral Humanism fundamentally believes in the synergy between the individual, society, the universe, and the Supreme authority. According to Upadhyaya, every nation has its cultural and societal central idea, termed as Chiti, and each society possesses unique characteristics identified as Virat. Every individual has various roles and activities. Integrating these diverse aspects of human life into continuous interaction is the essence of Integral Humanism.

This paper aims to delineate the scattered ideological attributes of Integral Humanism and explore its contemporary relevance in addressing present-day political crises. Integral Humanism strikes a balance between Western Capitalism and Marxist Socialism, avoiding the extremes of both. It seeks to restore the classical age's work in

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a purified climate, remaking anthropology and rehabilitating the human condition through divine and super-rational openness. Integral Humanism emphasizes the sanctification of the profane and temporal, seeking to rediscover human dignity through divine blessings. It directs social work towards the heroic ideal of brotherly love, not as a spontaneous return to primitive emotions, but as a challenging and virtuous conquest of the spirit. Humanism considers man in his natural and supernatural wholeness, setting no limits to the divine's descent into man.

Professor Visweswarayya mentioned that production systems must consider multiple factors, including the seven M's, and the usefulness of produced goods to society. Without considering the market demand, the production of commodities cannot be economically justified. Thus, a suitable technological approach should be developed, rather than merely importing machines and adapting other factors accordingly.

Deen Dayal Upadhyay is considered the architect of the first coalition phase in Indian politics. He proved to be a visionary thinker with ideas that extended beyond fixed horizons, evident in his works such as “Samrat Chandragupta,” “Jagatguru Sankaracharya,” and his analysis of Five-Year Plans. His fraternal attitude towards the Indian community, as enshrined in the preamble of the Indian Constitution, emphasized the brotherhood of shared heritage as central to political idealism. His ideas on politics, economics, society, and the nation were well appreciated. In his social theories, Upadhyaya stressed the importance of strengthening the family institution as the basic unity of society. His primary focus was on “Antyodaya,” the upliftment of the most deprived sections of society, aiming to improve them to the level of developed communities. He envisioned India as an ideal nation with the power to protect itself and sufficient wealth to feed its people.

Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya presented his views on various aspects of Indian culture and society, emphasizing an integrated view of both society and the individual. He believed that without individuals, society could not exist, and vice versa. Moral and material progress depends on factors like culture, Dharma, honesty, spirituality, and eternal aspects of human life. Integral Humanism emphasizes individual happiness and welfare, viewing life as integrated both socially and individually. Upadhyaya's philosophy is rooted in humanistic principles, promoting self-purity through thoughts and actions for the benefit of mankind. According to Upadhyaya, humankind possesses four hierarchical attributes: body, mind, intellect, and soul. He argued that economic prosperity alone does not ensure a quality life. The main goal of a country's economic system should be the all-around development of individuals. Wealth production aims primarily at providing happiness. Capitalism, with its focus on the economic man, and socialism, which arose in response to capitalism's problems, both fail to benefit mankind as they lead to centralization and monopolization. These systems do not align with Bharatiya philosophy.

Though Upadhyaya mentions Nobel Prize-winning economist Gunnar Myrdal by name, Integral Humanism lacks references to prominent developmental economists of the time, such as Albert Hirschman, Raul Prebisch, or Arthur Lewis. Given the scarcity of reliable sources on Upadhyaya, it is difficult to closely delineate his



intellectual lineage. However, broad influences from the intellectual climate of the period are apparent. Upadhyaya's search for a fundamentally humanist philosophy appears to be a response to the ideological dichotomy of the post-war global order. Integral Humanism was formulated alongside various 'Third Position' alternatives to the ideological polarization of the Cold War.

As the author of a short biography of the principal Advaita Vedanta philosopher Shankara, Upadhyaya's intellectual affinity for the Vedanta philosophical system was evident early in his career. The extent of influence from Vedantists like Aurobindo Ghosh on his thinking remains unclear. However, significant exposure to a specialized neo-Vedantic philosophy, particularly through the influence of political manifesto "Daishik Shastra" by Badri Shah Thuldharia, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, played a role. This work, advocating political action, is filled with Vedantic concepts imbibed from Swami Vivekananda. Integral Humanism situates its holistic orientation within the economy of human aspirations or Purushartha: Dharma (order), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), and Moksha (salvation). Upadhyaya appeals to this framework, even referencing the Vedic analogy between microcosm and macrocosm: "Yat pinde tad brahmande."

### Features of Integral Humanism

- **Rejection of Extremes:** Integral Humanism stands against both Western capitalist individualism and Marxist socialism, while being open to the advancements of Western science.
- **Balanced Approach:** It strives for a balanced approach between capitalism and socialism, assessing the merits of both systems and critiquing their excesses and unfamiliar elements.

### Four Objectives of Humankind

According to Upadhyaya, humankind comprises four hierarchical attributes: body, mind, intellect, and soul. These attributes correspond to four universal objectives:

- **Kama (Desire or Satisfaction)**
- **Artha (Wealth)**
- **Dharma (Moral Duties)**
- **Moksha (Total Liberation or Salvation)**

While all these objectives are significant, Dharma is considered the fundamental objective, and Moksha the ultimate goal of humankind and society. Upadhyaya dismissed other ideologies because both capitalist and socialist systems focus primarily on materialistic objectives related to desire and wealth, addressing only the needs of the body and mind.

### Upadhyaya's Views on Governance

- **Critique of Power Concentration:** In terms of governance, Upadhyaya viewed the excessive accumulation of political and economic power as



contradictory to Dharma. He implicitly criticized communist regimes and questioned the state-dominated, democratic socialism tendencies.

- **Corruption and Power:** Upadhyaya associated the concentration of power, including economic monopolies, with corruption and unethical behavior, which he referred to as adharmic misconduct.

### Upadhyaya's Views on Dharma

- **Comprehensive Concept:** According to Upadhyaya, Dharma is not limited to places of worship nor is it equivalent to religion.
- **Sustaining Principle:** He argued that Dharma is a broad concept, serving as the foundation for sustaining society and the universe, varying with time and place according to circumstances and needs.

### Upadhyaya's Views on Federalism

- **Criticism of Federal Structure:** Deendayal Upadhyaya criticized India's federal constitution and the special privileges based on caste, religion, language, and province.
- **Principles of Equality:** He believed these attributes were contrary to the principles of Dharma, which emphasize equality and unity among all citizens.
- **Advocacy for Unitary Constitution:** Upadhyaya favoured a unitary Constitution with the devolution of executive and decision-making powers to lower levels of societal organization, from regional states to village panchayats.

### Upadhyaya's Views on the Indian Constitution

- **Westminster Model Critique:** He criticized the Indian Constitution for adopting a Westminster-style parliamentary system, which he believed amplified social, political, linguistic, religious, and ethnic divisions.
- **Preference for Presidential System:** Upadhyaya argued that a Presidential system of governance, with appropriate safeguards and decentralization, could have mitigated these divisions.

### Upadhyaya's Views on Religious Freedom and Secularism

- **Dharma and Religious Freedom:** Upadhyaya affirmed that religious freedom should be limited when it infringes upon the freedom of others who do not belong to that faith.
- **Action Against Monotheism:** He emphasized the need for decisive action against the aggressive encroachment of exclusivist monotheisms.
- **Critique of Indian Secularism:** Upadhyaya argued that Indian secularism was wrongly defined in opposition to theocracy and equated with Dharma, leading to intellectual and political absurdity.



## **Conclusion**

Providing an insight into the integrated nature of Integral Humanism, Upadhyaya stated, “We do not accept the view that there is any permanent inevitable conflict among the multifarious personality of an individual, and different institutions of the society. If a conflict does exist, it is a sign of decadence perversion and not of nature or culture.” He explained that the concept of class conflict is an “error in Western thinking” and that India had historically been an integrated society without such conflicts.

His works align with the ideas of development as freedom, as pointed out by Nobel laureate Prof. Amartya Sen. In conclusion, the enhancement of the capability approach to skill development reflects the thoughtlines of DDU, promoting a blend of capitalism and socialism with Vedantic principles, ensuring that both society and the individual play positive roles.



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