

M. N. Roy's philosophy of 'Radical Humanism': An Overview

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Abstract :

The philosophical foundations of the political thought of M.N. Roy are rooted in Radical Humanism. Radical Humanism is neither materialism nor idealism but a scientific philosophy insisting upon the freedom of the individual. Radical Humanism lays greatest emphasis on the personality of the individual as a human being. Roy was disillusioned with communism and capitalism and therefore he propounded the theory of radical humanism and proposed a new model of democracy for India. Roy's main contention with communism was its utter disregard for and contempt for the human being. In communism man is treated as a helpless being dancing to the dictates of economic forces and his individual personality is subordinated for the collective interest. Similarly, malfunctions of Parliamentary Democracy and Laissez-Faire economic doctrine are equally ineffective to solve the crises of modern society. Roy's direction was for an organised democracy and co-operative economy. He tried to give these concepts a philosophical background through his radical humanism. He founded a new party named Radical Democratic Party to mobilise people and raise awareness about his ideas. New Humanism was the manifesto of the Radical Democratic Party. Roy also emphasised on the social fabric of 'New Humanism'. He stressed on the importance of education and rational thinking as an epitome that would give the people a perspective on how to respond to a particular situation in a rational manner.

Keywords: New Humanism, Radical Humanism, Radical Democratic Party, Parliamentary Democracy, Laissez-Faire, Communism.

Introduction

Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, later known as M. N. Roy (1887-1954) is one of the greatest, Indian philosophers of the twentieth century. Roy developed a new concept and termed it as 'Radical Humanism' or 'New Humanism' with a view to distinguish it from the humanist versions of other thinkers. It was radical because it rejected many, if not most, of the traditional political and philosophical assumptions of Indian society. It was humanism because it focused entirely on the needs and situation of human beings. His weekly journal, *Independent India*, which started in 1937, was renamed as *The Radical Humanist* to propagate his views on society and social reconstruction. The word humanism is derived from the Latin word 'Humanus', which refers to a system of thought concerned with human affairs in general. Humanism is an attitude which attaches primary importance to man and his faculties, affairs and aspirations (Padhy 2011: 201). The term 'humanism' is not new and the same can be traced in the writings of Protagoras, Erasmus, More, Herder, Jacques Maritain, etc. As the ultimate theoretical construct of M.N. Roy, the philosophy of 'Radical Humanism' or 'New Humanism' represents the zenith of an intellectually bewildering journey spanning over a period of thirty years. The genesis of the concept of 'New Humanism' lies in the frustration of Roy with the subtle characteristics of the Marxian philosophy like its feeble ethical moorings and overemphasis on the economic interpretation of history to the substantive, if not total, disregard to the value of the intellect in the dynamics of the historical processes. Thus, initially Roy tried to evolve a radical perspective on humanism which still had a lot to owe to Marxism. However, dissatisfied even with his radical incarnation, Roy made the final move of propounding a theory rooted in integral scientific humanism which he called as the 'New Humanism', new because it is humanism enriched, reinforced and elaborated by scientific knowledge and social experience gained during the centuries of modern civilisation (Roy 1947: 42). This article has been divided into eight sections. The first section deals with M.N. Roy's transformation from a socialist to a radical humanist. The second section discusses about materialism being a fundamental pillar of Roy's 'Radical Humanism' and how Roy in spite of being a thorough going Marxist he differed from Karl Marx in several different ways. He continued to be a materialist, but believed that the Marxian doctrine of Materialism was dogmatic and unscientific. The third section highlights that the core of 'Radical Humanism' of Roy lies in laying greatest emphasis on the personality of the individual as a human being. In other words this section emphasises that 'Radical Humanism' of M.N. Roy is

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individualism. The fourth section discusses how the human being, as the central agent of the 'New Humanism' of M.N. Roy, is supposed to be characterised by three fundamental elements of reason, morality and freedom. The fifth section highlights on the economic dimensions of 'New Humanism' where Roy emphasises for economic re-organisation of the society free from exploitation of one man by another, leading to the establishment of cooperative economy. The sixth section emphasises on the notion of 'organised democracy' being the hallmark of the political dimension of the 'New Humanism' of M.N. Roy. In spite of being a democrat to the core, Roy strictly was against classical parliamentary form of democracy as prevalent in the West and advocated party-less democracy. The seventh section emphasises M.N. Roy's strong advocacy in favour of education. The eighth section highlights on the social fabric of 'New Humanism'. Roy emphasised on the importance of education and he also opined that it would give the people a perspective on how to respond to a particular situation in a rational manner. Therefore the whole scheme of Roy's New Humanism would be operationalised only when the masses are adequately educated in rational thinking (Kaviraj 1986: 210).

I

M.N. Roy was a born revolutionary. In his early years he was influenced by Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra, Swami Ramtirtha, Dayanand Saraswati and Jatin Mukherjee. At the age of fourteen he joined the revolutionary movement for India's independence. He actively participated in the Swadeshi Movement and anti-partition movement in Bengal (1905). He was arrested in 1907 in connection with a political dacoity in Calcutta and in 1910, he was arrested in connection with the Howrah Conspiracy case. Inspired by revolutionary terrorism, M.N. Roy was politically baptised when he was entrusted with the task of receiving a German steamer carrying arms for the revolutionary terrorists (Mishra 2012: 296). This 1914 attempt to smuggle arms in ships failed and the plan for an armed insurrection against the British was aborted. He was arrested in 1915 in connection with another political dacoity in Calcutta and in the same year he fled to Dutch Indies. He also went to Java, Philippines, Korea, Manchuria, Japan, China, USA and Mexico. He reached San Francisco in late 1915. It was here that he came in contact with the Indian revolutionaries and Indian students who were working for India's struggle for independence. From USA, M.N. Roy went to Mexico in 1916. Here, he contributed several articles about India's poverty and the method in which the British were exploiting Indian resources. Roy founded the first Communist Party in Mexico, the first in America and outside the European continent and became its Secretary-General. While he was in Mexico, he was called by V.I. Lenin after the Bolshevik Revolution to Russia. Roy reached Russia in the beginning of 1920 and became an adviser of the Bolshevik Party on colonial questions. He attended the second Congress of the Communist International. He put forward his own thesis and even pointed out the defects of the resolutions sponsored by Lenin. He had a difference of opinion with Lenin. In fact, Roy's views were more realistic and Lenin was impressed by this thesis. Roy was also elected as the member of the Central Asiatic Board by the Communist Party to propagate the cause of Communism in India (Kaviraj 1986: 213).

In 1922, M.N. Roy, went to Berlin to organise the Indian National revolutionaries there and also started a journal, '*The Vanguard of Indian Independence*'. He was named a member of the Presidium of the Comintern at its fourth International Congress. He also insisted for a separate Communist Party in India, to spread communism in a better way. He also suggested the formation of People's Party with a revolutionary programme. Gradually he got dissatisfied with the Communist Organisation and on account of differences with its members, he came back to India in December 1930. On the invitation of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Roy attended the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress held in March 1931. In July 1931 he was, however arrested and imprisoned for six years. After his release in 1936, he became a member of the Indian National Congress and wished to organise it on a revolutionary basis. In April, 1937, he started his weekly, '*Independent India*' which was later named as '*Radical Humanist*' (Haithcox 1971: 67). In June 1939, Roy organised the League of Radical Congressmen. He contested the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress in 1940 but was defeated by Abul Kalam Azad. After his defeat Roy left the Congress in September 1940. After this he organised his Radical Democratic Party in December 1940 and moved towards 'New Humanism'. Although M.N. Roy was a powerful exponent of Marxism or Communism during the early years of his life, but later on he became a pronounced critic of communist theory and practice. He realised that communism provided no solution to worldly problems and in communism man is treated as a helpless being dancing to the dictates of economic forces and his individual personality is subordinated for the collective

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interest. Therefore he changed over from Marxism to what he called 'Radical Humanism' and this was a great contribution of M.N. Roy towards Modern Indian Political Thought (Ray and Mishra 2012: 297).

II

A fundamental principle of M.N. Roy's philosophy of 'Radical Humanism' is materialism. He was a thorough going Marxist but he differed from Karl Marx in several different ways. He continued to be a materialist, but believed that the Marxian doctrine of 'Materialism' was dogmatic and unscientific. Roy interpreted the term materialism in a different way. He wrote in an introduction to *Scientific Politics*, "Our approach to the problems of political theory and practice claimed to be free from any dogmatic pre-supposition. Otherwise we could not pretend to be advocates of Scientific Politics. Freedom from dogma is the specific feature of his thought. Those who regard Marxism as such a closed system of thought cannot also pretend to subscribe to the iconoclastic principles of Radicalism which knows no dogma and respects no authority" (Roy 1951: 77). Thus, he took the scientific method of Marx in his new philosophy of 'Radical Humanism'. M.N. Roy regarded matter as real and independent. Mind is the outcome of matter. In Roy's view there is no difference between the organic and inorganic matter. All living bodies were created out of certain chemical matters. Roy believed that mind was the product of matter at a high stage of development. On the basis of matter, M.N. Roy explained the origin of life and mind. Biological evolution takes place from physical universe. In the words of Roy, 'For, it represents the knowledge of nature as it really exists. Knowledge is acquired through the contemplation, observation and investigation of the phenomenon of nature itself....It simply maintains that the origin of everything that exists is matter, that there does not exist anything but matter, all other appearances being transformations of matter, and these transformations are governed necessarily by laws inherent in nature.... our bodies, our organs of sensation.....the nervous system, the brain, the entire cognitive apparatus have grown out of the background of inanimate matter.' All living bodies are formed out of such chemical elements as carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulphur, potassium, sodium, etc. Hence to Roy, there is a close relationship between mind and matter. M.N. Roy corroborated his materialistic philosophy with the latest scientific knowledge (Haithcox 1971: 70).

III

The core of the 'Radical Humanism' of Roy lies in laying greatest emphasis on the personality of the individual as human being. In other words 'Radical Humanism' of M.N. Roy is individualism. He was critical of all those theories and perspectives which did not take the individual as the focal point of analysis. For instance, his opposition to Marxism stemmed from, among other things, its undue stress on the phenomenon of class struggle under which the human being lost his individuality in order to become a part of one class or the other. At the same time he denounced the framework of nationalism also apparently due to the fact that it also subsumes the personality of the human being within meta constructions of nation and nationhood (Jayapalan 2010 : 253). According to Roy, 'Radical Humanism', says nothing new when it demands that man must be the measure of everything. The Greek philosopher Protagoras had made the declaration 2500 years ago. The 19th Century humanists also attached great importance to man and individual liberty but Roy believed that they could not get away from the fallacy of subordinating man to some super-human and super-natural agencies (Tarkunde 1983: 55). To Roy, man is the centre of that Humanism which banishes very type of super-natural agency from the human world. The Indian humanists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru also attached great importance to man and individual liberty. But according to Roy, none of them can be called a true humanist. M.N. Roy explained 'Radical Humanism' as a philosophy of freedom based on modern scientific knowledge (Roy 1945: 64).

The philosophy of 'New Humanism', in fact, clamours to act as the liberator of man from the advertent or inadvertent fetters which were put on him by the various theoretical constructs over a period of time in history. Espousing the radicalism in the innate qualities of man, 'New Humanism' discounts any claim that man draws his self or independent status from any super-physical being. Rather, it reiterates the fundamental doctrine of 'Radical Humanism' that human beings derive all their virtues and prowess from their creative attainments in unravelling the mysteries and partial conquest of nature. Roy, therefore, argues that if man stretches out his abilities and ingenuities to move out of the circumference of nature, how can he be subordinated to something which itself is very artificial and man-made enough to be undone time and again. Hence what remains permanent is the solid personality of man

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consisting of psychological units on the one hand and rational intellectual faculties on the other (Chakrabarty and Pandey 2009: 169).

IV

The human being, as the central agent of the 'New Humanism' of M.N. Roy, is supposed to be characterised by three fundamental elements of reason, morality and freedom. Reason, according to Roy, is a biological property, and it is not opposed to human will. Given the diversity in the nature and characteristics of the vast majority of people, Roy takes rationality as the unifying element in every human being echoing the notion of harmony in the universe. Taking every man as essentially rational, Roy convincingly argues that the behaviour of every person is rational, though it may appear to be irrational at times owing to the differences in the underlying patterns of life in different parts of the world. The innate rationality in the personality of every human being entails on him the capability of discovering and rediscovering the laws of nature in order to unfetter him from the hidden bondages which happen to be imposed on him for the time being (Dr. Ramedra 2001: 13)

Morality constitutes another significant trait of man as conceptualised by M.N. Roy. However Roy was quick enough to discard the notion that morality is based on institutional and transcendental pillars. Applying the canons of Marxian training, Roy argues that morality stems out of the scientific application of human rationality to the dynamics of social relations and mutual adjustments of people with one another. Morality, which originates from the rational desire for harmonious and mutually beneficial social relations, is rooted in the innate rationality of man. Given the innate unifying and creative value of morality in society, Roy asserts that it aims at translating into reality the collective and common good of the whole society (Dr. Ramedra 2001: 14).

However the most important characteristic of radical humanist ethics is freedom or liberty. According to Roy, individual is an end in itself and society was simply a means to that end. He subordinated everything to individual freedom. According to Roy, man created society with certain objectives in mind. It meant that all social relations, political, economic, social and ethical must be adjusted to the fundamental requirement of promoting freedom or liberty of the individual. Roy even subordinated religion, morality and any other supernatural powers to individual freedom. According to Roy, the state and society were established to maintain individual liberty. But unfortunately some devices were trying to dominate man and suppress his freedom. Religion or morality also destroyed individual liberty imposing on human mind the chains of superstition and supernatural beliefs. Roy regarded marriage, family and class as obstacles to human development and freedom. He also regarded society and class as greatest hindrances to individual freedom. He wanted society to be understood as a means to an end and not as an end in itself (Dr. Ramedra 2001: 16). Freedom or liberty, to Roy, epitomises the crux of biological struggle for self protection and multiplication of the human beings in a somewhat hostile nature. In order words, the human being's quest for finding out the laws of nature and the dynamics of the functioning of the cosmos has the ultimate objective of providing certain clues to him to enable him to get rid of the restrictions imposed by nature. The product of this enterprise is freedom for man. Quest for freedom and search for truth, according to Roy, constitute the basic urge of human progress. The purpose of all-rational human endeavour, individual as well as collective, is attainment of freedom in ever-increasing measure. The amount of freedom available to the individuals is the measure of social progress. Roy refers back the quest for freedom to human being's struggle for existence, and he regards search for truth as a corollary to this quest. Therefore, the notion, of freedom, argues Roy, consists of the inalienable elements of humanism, collectivism, individualism and rationalism (Roy 1945: 61). The application of rationality by the individual in his search for knowledge culminates, in the final analysis, in the idea of humanism.

The cumulative impact of the elements of reason, morality and freedom on human beings has provided a cosmopolitan perspective to the theory of 'New Humanism'. As Roy categorically points out, 'New Humanism is cosmopolitan. A cosmopolitan commonwealth of spiritually free men will not be limited to the boundaries of national states – capitalist, fascist, socialist, communist, or of any other kind – which will gradually disappear under the impact of the twentieth century renaissance of man.' The cosmopolitanism of 'New Humanism' goes beyond the notion of internationalism, as the latter is based on the assumption of the fledging existence of various nation-states in the world. However, 'New Humanism' presupposes the antagonism between the vibrancy of nation-states and the concept of cosmopolitanism. The realisation of the dream of cosmopolitanism, therefore, becomes

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conditional to the fact that nation states are neutralised, if not decimated, as the formidable actors in the world (Roy 1947: 50).

V

Highlighting on the economic dimensions of 'New Humanism', Roy emphasises for economic re-organisation of the society free from exploitation of one man by another, leading to the establishment of cooperative economy. He held that the existing economic system was responsible for crushing the individual freedom. Therefore, he emphasised on planned economic development comprising of the virtues of cooperation and decentralisation underpinning the system. Thus, the communal pattern of social growth, as emphasised by Roy, would have yielded the maximum individual freedom to all men in the society. However, Roy was prudent enough to factor the role of state in the economic activities of men and considered it as some sort of necessary evil. In fact, the conduct of economic activities in the society in a communal manner was disturbed by the origin of private property. The obvious probability of the ensuing disagreements amongst individuals necessitated the creation of some sort of regulatory mechanism to maintain minimum order in the conduct of the economic activities of the people. Thus, Roy is of the opinion that the advent of the mechanism of state is neither due to a social contract nor superimposed on the society. On the contrary, it happens to be a historical and natural phenomenon arising out in the context of need for a common instrument to ensure the security and order for all in the society. Over the years, the concentration of power in the hands of the state is taken by Roy as a perversion of the role designed for the qualified administrators who confine to themselves maximum powers to lord over the people. Opposing it vehemently, Roy seeks to reorganise the structure and functions of the state based on the doctrines of democracy, decentralisation and pluralism. Like classical liberals, Roy also argues for minimal interference of the state in the activities of the people and the emergence of a number of other equally important and autonomous social institutions who would act in tandem with the state to ensure a free and contended life for the people (Tarkunde 1983: 52).

M.N. Roy was not opposed to private property, provided it did not lead to exploitation of one man by another. Therefore he insisted that for some time the industry, particularly the higher basic industries, should not be passed on to the private sector and the state should act as the co-ordinating agency both in the public and private sector. The other features of his economic set-up including network of consumers and producer co-operatives were to take full advantage of the scientific and technological advancement and there would be a planning body which would allocate priorities to the national resources and plan social utility services. In case of under-developed countries like India (which was predominantly an agricultural country) he emphasised the need of large scale industrialisation. However he was opposed to the introduction of agricultural machinery in a country like India because of the fear that thousands of peasants and workers would be thrown out of employment. He stood for state financed agricultural and industrial enterprises and permitted freedom of enterprise to the individual on the condition that the production would be carried to satisfy the economic life of the society and the state would have the right to fix the prices of goods produced and exchanged. The state would also fix the remuneration and working conditions of the wage earners and salaried employees, and to take over private enterprises under state ownership by paying fair compensation to the private owners (Tarkunde 1983: 54)

VI

The notion of 'organised democracy' (Roy 1947: 12) is the hallmark of the political dimension of the 'New Humanism' of M.N. Roy. Being a democrat to the core, Roy, nevertheless, despised the classical parliamentary form of democracy as prevalent in the West. To him, democratic political setup must be the facilitator of a participative citizenry in the country, which the liberal parliamentary democracy seemed to have failed miserably. At the same time Roy, also denounced the communist democratic systems characterised by the notion of democratic centralism and asked for dismantling the same. His conception of organised democracy, therefore was expected to serve the very people who would lie at the root of the democratic system of the country as it would not be structured in the top-heavy model where the higher-ups would wield the stick over the lower rung of leadership (Ray and Mishra 2012: 295).

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'New Humanism' believes in the value of humanist politics also, which means, in simple terms, politics not for power but for the purification and rationalisation of the political life of the people. M.N. Roy's concept of organised democracy was based on decentralisation and partyless democracy. Like Jaya Prakash Narayan, he also opposed the system of party-politics. According to M.N. Roy, the emergence of political parties has brought in its wake all the evils of party-politics. With the rise of party system, the idea of popular sovereignty became a constitutional fiction. The political parties encourage hollowness and insincerity, which leads to spoils system and degradation of moral values. In the modern democratic states, there is rule by a party which constitutes only a small fraction of the people, in fact a rule by minority over majority. According to Roy, the system of party-politics leads to bribery and corruption. The main objective of political parties is to capture political power by all means. They do not hesitate to retain power following unscrupulous and corrupt means. Money plays a very important role in politics. In the struggle for power, political parties ignore the principles of morality and public welfare. Roy was of the opinion that the people above corruption stay out of the scramble for power because it might corrupt even the best of men. He was of the opinion that in the name of welfare state, the party in power restricts freedom of the people. He, therefore, suggested the system of organised democracy for establishing the real freedom of the individual (Tarkunde 1983: 55)

In his organised democracy, there was no place for political parties and power was to be vested in the hands of the people themselves. In this new social order the people were the sovereign. Roy wanted that his concept of organised democracy should be put into practice. Roy believed that even in large political units and highly complex social organisations of the modern world, direct democracy will be possible in the form of a network of small co-operative commonwealths which will replace the helpless atomised voter of formal parliamentary democracy. Under this new system, the principle of popular sovereignty would be real and effective. The whole structure of the system would be based on local democracies. Roy, however, laid down certain basic conditions for the success of his organised democracy. One such condition was that the people should be of sufficiently high general cultural level. The power should be vested only in those persons who have a high moral character and high standard of intelligence. Otherwise they will be duped by the clever demagogues. According to Roy, until the intellectual level of the entire community is raised considerably, election alone cannot possibly bring its best elements to the forefront and unless the available intellectual level and moral integrity are brought to bear upon the situation, democracy cannot come on its own. He also observed that the people had not yet attained high moral standards, so, he suggested that at the initial stages there should be elective and selective democracy both. Roy drafted a model Constitution of India on the basis of his organised democracy. Part I of the Constitution dealt with the declaration of rights and fundamental principles, according to which supreme sovereignty vested in the people who would have absolute right to change or modify any political unit. A bill of rights containing not only political and social, but economic rights was also incorporated in the Constitution (Jayapalan 2012: 259).

The method of proportional representation was also incorporated in the Constitution to protect the rights of the minorities. According to Roy, all the provinces in India, would be formed on the basis of linguistic and cultural homogeneity. He suggested a federal type of government and advocated for institutions of referendum, initiative and recall. The following institutions were suggested by Roy, in his model Constitution for free India:-

a) People's Committees:- M.N. Roy suggested the system of direct democracy where the power would flow from the people. The people would exercise their sovereign power through the local people's committees. According to him, 'Political ends can be achieved without capturing power. Politics can be practised without a party organisation'. He suggested that there would be people's committee in each village, city or town, elected annually on the basis of adult franchise (18 years or of above age). The total number of each people's committee will be one fifth (1/5th) of the total number of voters in the locality. Roy suggested that larger and larger powers of managing local affairs should be entrusted to these committees. The other functions of these committees shall be to nominate candidates for seeking election to Provincial Council and to the Federal Assembly; to recommend the recall of elected representatives of the respective constituency either in the Federal Assembly or in the Provincial People's Council and to recommend the recall of the Governor General or the Governor of the respective province. The people's committees shall also initiate legislation and could demand a referendum on any executive or legislative measure. In short, the people's committees shall become the political schools to train the people in intelligent citizenship (Chandra 1998: 92).

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b) Provincial People's Council:- Each province shall have a Provincial People's Council consisting of the Governor and Deputies of the people. The Governor shall be elected directly by the people of the province for a term of five years. The Deputies of the people will also be directly elected by the people of the province for a period of four years. This council shall meet once in three months to legislate on all matters except those reserved for the Federal Assembly. It will also form a Provincial Council of Ministers to perform the executive functions of the province. The Council of Ministers will be collectively responsible to the council. The Provincial People's Council shall also supervise and control the working of various departments in the province (Chandra 1998: 94).

c) Supreme People's Council:- Roy suggested Federal Union for free India which would include both the British India and the Indian provinces. According to him, all provinces in India would be formed on the basis linguistic and cultural homogeneity. The provinces shall have the right to secede from the Federal Union. He also suggested that the Federation of India shall be a member of British Commonwealth. He also suggested the system of referendum. At the central level there shall be a Supreme People's Council consisting of the Governor-General, Council of State and the Federal Assembly. The Governor-General shall be elected by the entire electorate for a period of five years. He shall preside over the joint sessions of the Council of the State and Federal Assembly (Chakrabarty and Pandey 2009: 174).

d) Federal Assembly:- It will consist of elected representatives of the Federal Union, each representative for every five lakh people. They shall be elected on the basis of adult franchise in a manner specially devised for the election. It will meet at least quarterly and could be dissolved by the Governor-General before the expiry of the term on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The Federal Assembly will legislate on the subjects other than assigned to the Provincial Councils. It will form a Federal Council of Ministers to perform the administrative duties. The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Supreme People's Council. The Federal Assembly would also supervise and control the working of various departments (Karnik 1980: 87).

e) Council of State:- It will consist of intelligent people appointed by the Provincial Government for a period of six years, and its numbers shall be equal for all the Provinces. The members will be nominated from various professions – engineers, economists, scientists, doctors, jurists, historians and such other persons having outstanding contributions in Philosophy or Social Sciences. There would also be three civil servants from each province. The Council of State will be an advisory body, to guide and advise the assembly. It will also supervise planning in the socio-economic sector, health, education and cultural fields. In addition to this Roy, also suggested the organisation of the judiciary to deal with cases brought before it both by citizens and provinces. He also mentioned various institutions to perform the functions of local self-government in their respective areas. These institutions would be responsible for maintaining sanitation, public health, education – primary and secondary – building and maintenance of roads and public parks etc (Chakrabarty and Pandey 2009: 174).

VII

A very significant facet of M.N. Roy's 'Radical Humanism' or 'New Humanism' was his strong advocacy in favour of education. Roy was against compulsory Primary Education. Any compulsion is against liberty. An education which seeks to maintain status quo is not suitable for making the community conscious of its inherent powers. Education should help man and women to think rationally and to decide themselves about how the problems are to be solved. Roy lamented that no government provides such an education. The state governed education teaches the masses to sing songs of patriotism, salute the National Flag, to study history, edited by government and to work collectively to achieve success of the state. He opined that no national-education provided by government in any country is the true democratic education. Roy says that there are important types of education. They are :-

a) Education of Citizenship:- Roy considered education, as the foundation for democracy. It is only through education, rational individuals can be created. Once the process of education is started, other steps may be taken, for the establishment of democratic structure. He considered that the education of citizens and the gradual building up of a political organisation from below is the only guarantee against the dangers of party system. Roy considered that scientific education will make people self dependent, rational and distinctive, and they cannot be misled by any

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self interested groups or parties. He thought a good education will give faith to a new institutional organisation, which will be a guarantee against exploitation by an individual or a group of individuals (Karnik 1980: 88).

b) Political Education:- The expansion of education will make the citizen oppose all sorts of exploitation by an individual or a group. In the present situation victory in elections, does not mean that the winning party is liked by the people. It also may mean that the candidate of the winning party has money to spend, or muscle power to coax the voters. Educated voters, once they realise that a particular candidate is more after his self interest than the community welfare, will not get him elected again – thus the humanist political system gives importance to education of the citizens (Karnik 1980: 89).

c) Education of Freedom:- According to M.N Roy, so long as the moral and cultural level of the people does not rise, the aim of education is not realised. The education provided in so called parliamentary democracies is not the education of freedom, but an education of slavery. These states provide compulsory free primary education to create citizens supporting the state and not free individuals. According to 'New Humanism', it is not in the interest of the government or the state to curb the citizen's freedom to grow their capacities, because ultimately a welfare state aims at making its citizens more and more free. The aim of education is to create among the people a consciousness towards humanity, consciousness towards its right to be human beings and consciousness of its excellence and dignity. The purpose of education is to help them in utilising their reason in this type of thinking. It is only such an education that may create true democracies, in the world, thus strengthening freedom. But, he, feels, such education can be provided by the enlightened and free individuals and institutions and not by the state-owned educational institutions (Ray 2000a: 36).

d) Education for different sections of society:- Roy feels that in the modern political and administrative structures there is no freedom for the individual. Social Justice and equity requires that all individuals must be free and equal. Roy thinks man's political democracy is not sufficient. There should be economic and social democracy, which are also equally important and necessary. This democratisation of institutions – social, political and economic is possible only through proper education, which gives importance to these values. Such education should be universally available, accessible and affordable to all sections of society. Roy condemns the ancient Indian distinction between male and female; Brahmin and Shudra regarding the facility of education. He condemns all types of distinctions between different sections of society based upon political, economic or social considerations. Roy thinks that the aims and ideas of education can be achieved only by realisation of human values and the establishment of a humanist society. The sole aim of the state is to help in the achievement of this aim. Therefore, the state must arrange for the education of different sections of society. During Roy's time sufficient facility of education was not available to female and Backward Classes in India. Along with most of his contemporary, Indian philosophers of education Roy raised his voice against this inequality. The credit of the vast expansion of education among these sections of Indian society goes as much to Roy as to other contemporary Indian philosophers of education (Ray 2000b: 49).

VIII

The social fabric of New Humanism was designed by M.N. Roy out of his subtle conclusion that class struggle could not be the only reality in a society (Roy 1947: 26). Rather, Roy was of the opinion that no society could sustain itself without some sort of cohesiveness existing amongst the people. At the same time Roy also discarded the classical Marxian formulation of the existence of only two classes – the haves and the have-nots – in the society. In order to provide for an educated, rational and mobile class which could have acted as a buffer between the two seemingly antagonistic classes, Roy accorded a prized status to the middle class in his social perspective of 'New Humanism'. Despite recognising the role of middle class as the moderator of the social cohesion in the society, Roy was emphatic to give the primacy to the individual rather than the class in social formation of 'New Humanism'. Finally according to Roy, the ideal 'New Humanism' could be made productive only through the medium of education. Implying the broadest possible connotation of the term education, Roy was of the opinion that it was futile to talk about revolution being brought about through the means of class struggle or violent means. To him, education could be the slow but sure emancipator of the people from the shackles of the anachronistic and irrational system of life. Hence, Roy pleaded for the denunciation of the idea of violent and quick revolution to defend the virtues of rationality, morality and freedom amongst the people, creating the background for the ushering

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in of a new era of evolved revolutionary life. The enlightenment going deep into the minds and heart of the masses through the methodology of education would be far more indelible and everlasting than the ideological intoxication in a short span of time. Education would be able to bare the truth in face of people and give them a perspective on how to respond to a particular situation in a rational manner. Therefore the whole scheme of Roy's 'New Humanism' would be operationalised only when the masses are adequately educated in rational thinking, so that they are able to look for plausible revolutionary solutions to the problems plaguing the society (Chakrabarty and Pandey 2009: 172-173).

CONCLUSION:

M. N Roy was perhaps the most fascinating radicals among the Indian nationalists of his generation. Roy underwent a complete metamorphosis in his personality transforming from a nationalist-revolutionary into a rationalist-humanist during the final years of his life. He followed the nationalist-revolutionary line of thought and action until he realised that independence of a nation from foreign bondage was not a necessary and natural corollary of the freedom of its citizens from servitude and exploitation. He remained a Marxist until his disenchantment with the technique of dictatorship of the proletariat which undermined the very concept of individual freedom vis-à-vis the collective entity of a state. He was equally apprehensive about the success of parliamentary democracy in which political parties and their leaders at the apex played a decisive role in getting candidates selected and elected to form governments; where sectarian sympathies and partisan emotions were the cunning tactics of winning elections. Roy and members of his Radical Democratic Party were not accepted by the voters because they failed to identify with the latter. He realised that it was too early for the Indian common men to understand the meaning and value of participatory democracy propagated by his party because they were seeped in the feudal tradition of monarchic hierarchy as well as in the customs of a religious patriarchal society. Roy had envisaged a scientific, rational, democratic, egalitarian and humanist Indian society. But for the few emancipated minds, the country was not open to his cosmopolitan approach towards life. Technology and its dramatic innovations were yet to influence the lives of Indian people. Roy was much ahead of his times and refused to compromise with scientifically irrational or ethically unsound tenets of practical politics. He paid a heavy cost for this and was neglected in Indian politics. He failed to become a populist leader of the masses. Roy was too early an experiment for them.

It was only later in June 1974, twenty years after Roy's death when his idea of forming 'People's Committees' at the grass-root level, giving them power to legislate, opine and vote on issues of personal and national importance as well as to recall the erring members of legislatures, thus, rendering political parties useless (all described, in detail, in his Draft Constitution of Free India) was picked up by Jaya Prakash Narayan in his concept of 'Total Revolution'. This time the youth rose to the occasion because it had become aware now of the political rights of an independent sovereign state. Yet the revolution could not fulfil its dream of a participatory party-less democracy because the voter was still not politically emancipated. They were aware of their fundamental rights but confused about their political duties. A small group of dedicated leaders could not turn the tide in 'Total Revolution's' favour and traditional power-politics again took charge of the situation. Taking the second example from the present, after sixty years of Roy's absence from the scene, Aam Admi Party (AAP) wants to govern with the help of 'Mohalla Samitees', and we are again reminded of Roy's idea of 'People's Committees'. The voter is politically more mature now than in 1954 and 1974. But has he also become morally and culturally mature enough to know the difference of a modern, democratic, civic society from a traditional, religious, feudal society? Civic maturity of the voters is the mandatory prerequisite for the success of participatory democracy. And that has to be done with the help of expert professionals, truthful administrators and selfless politicians who are culturally reformed and scientifically modern in their approach towards life; who have learnt to respect all human beings without any discrimination with an urge to make this country a cleaner and better place to live in. They are required to work amongst the voters as their 'educators'.

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This is what Roy had suggested, honesty in desire is one thing but ability to fulfil it is another. Complex issues of the modern society cannot be solved merely by goodwill and consensus but by expert opinions as well, otherwise chaos and anarchy will prevail. The traditional political bosses are impatiently waiting for this turn of events to disprove the concept of participatory democracy in India challenging the ability and maturity of the voters to do so. When our nation was basking in the glory of the Westminster model of representative democracy, Roy was apprehensive of the political morality of its representatives. He had categorically said that corruption in politics and administration would be the natural by product of power-hungry politicians and politically immature and vulnerable citizens. He wanted a socially and culturally reformed India where ethically emancipated and politically matured voters would select politicians from among the selfless social workers at the grass-root level. He wanted dedicated humanists to help in ushering in a scientific renaissance in traditionally orthodox minds of our country-men. We live in an age where production is sumptuous but distribution is partial; where science has conquered irrationality but religion is propagating myths and superstitions where technology has brought humanity closer but nationalism is instigating wars and terrorism. Philosophers and thinkers have contributed to the refinement of human knowledge; science and technology have given facilities of comfort and ease to human existence but frauds and deceptions have tried to spoil true human progress in all areas of the world's living humanity. In such a situation Roy's principle of ethical-politics and rational-social morality appears to be the only solution for the salvation of human strife.

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