CHAPTER – III
Manabendra Roy (1887-1954) originally known as Narendranath Bhattacharyya, is a legendary figure of the twentieth century. Roy joined the Bengal Revolutionary Movement while he was in his teens. He was attracted by the philosophy of Karl Marx. He recognizes the contributions of Marx in giving a new social philosophy, but rejects the interpretation of Marxism by the contemporary communists. Roy states, “The abolition of private property, state ownership of the means of production and planned economy do not themselves end exploitation of labour nor lead to an equal distribution of wealth.”¹ For him, a political or economic system which subordinates man for abstract collective ego cannot become a suitable means for attainment of freedom. So he detaches himself from Marxism and develops a new philosophy known as Radical Humanism or New Humanism. He possesses a progressive mind and so is ready to accept new ideas based on human experience. The main objective of his Radical Humanism is individual freedom. Roy is especially interested in the problem of man and his society. His whole life is devoted for the cause of individual freedom. The ideal of human liberty is his mission, vision and goal.
3.1 Radical Humanism

Roy's Radical Humanism is primarily concerned with human life and its main objective is individual freedom. For him, 'it had to be a philosophy concerned with human life, a philosophy which would set human spirit free, a philosophy which would explain all the phenomena of nature and experiences of human life without any reference to supernatural powers – a philosophy with a social purpose'. It is called humanism, because it gives individual man the place of supreme importance.

Roy is a man with an open mind. He tries to know things in the light of new experience. He stresses on the development of a new philosophical vision. So he can be called a progressive thinker. As a progressive thinker, Roy does not want to consider history merely as a succession of events. Roy holds that in history, there are records of man's struggle for freedom. In the past, finding himself helpless against the forces of nature, man submitted himself to the supernatural agencies, like God. As a result of a long struggle, man ultimately could realize the illusion of his relation with God. Thus men liberate themselves from the tyranny of theology and prejudices of supernaturalism. Roy develops his Radical Humanism in such a scientific age. In his Radical Humanism Roy holds that welfare of the individual man is the criterion by which liberating significance of all social theories, institution is to be judged. It shows that Roy in his Radical Humanism judges the merit of any social order by the freedom it
gives to the individual man. Thus a society which gives the greatest measure of
freedom to the individual is the freest society. Here, men are always taken as
ends, not as means. Roy's humanism rejects all sorts of collectivism which
places a collective ego above the individual. It considers man as the principal
agent for all social progress. He holds that society, state and other organizations
are created by man for his own welfare. Man can also change it for his greater
welfare and convenience. Therefore, Roy does not accept the view that human
history is determined. The philosophy of Radical Humanism accepts the dictum
of Protagoras- 'Man is the measure of everything' - as fundamental. It is called
Radical because it tries to explain the problems from the roots. It is also called
New Humanism because, "It is humanism, reinforced and elaborated by
scientific knowledge and social experience gained during the centuries of
modern civilization".2

New Humanism of Roy is a theory of freedom. It is based on individual
initiative, individual endeavour and individual freedom. It wants to show that
individual needs freedom and it is the most vital and important. The quest for
freedom is the basic urge of human progress. It places man in the centre of the
world. To distinguish his humanism from communism, Roy says, "Radicalism is
not a revolutionary nationalism, nor is it slightly heretical communism. It is a
distinctive philosophy."3 It indicates that Radicalism has a distinctive approach
to all problems of life. This outlook helps to discover a new way of Revolution. In
this regard Roy holds, “Revolutionary philosophies which hold that freedom is conditional upon individuals sacrificing themselves on the altar of a collective ego, be that nation or a class, have debased politics, and thrown the world in the present crisis. We want to revive the old philosophy of freedom in order to purify politics; so to say, in order to contribute to the solution of the crisis.”

In his Radicalism, Roy tries to judge every human problem from the standpoint of individual freedom. Roy asserts that freedom should be the ideal of civilized human beings and freedom could be experienced only by an individual. The approach of Radical Humanism to the problems of freedom is scientific. It is free from any dogmatic presuppositions and freedom from dogma is the feature of scientific thought. Roy’s Radical Humanism also does not depend on any authority. It is observed that Roy has more confidence on man’s rational and moral nature. So he holds that as men are by nature rational and moral, they are capable of building a free, harmonious and just social order. Radical Humanism consists of all positive elements of Marxism, free from its fallacies. ‘The root of mankind is man himself’ is not his opinion, Roy emphatically states. It is a quotation from Marx. The fundamental principle of Marx is, ‘being determined consciousnesses’. Man’s consciousness is the result of his being. Social organization presupposes the existence of individuals. Collective effort is the means to the end of man’s self expression or freedom. Man comes before society. Roy clarifies the positive elements of Marxism in the
light of greater scientific knowledge. He does not regard Marxism as a methodology. He always insists on the view that Marxism is a philosophy.

It is observed that Roy’s explanation of individual freedom is not merely theoretical but based on his practical experience. It is a philosophy which has grown out of experience. It is developed in response to a cultural crisis of the modern world. For Roy, culture is a product of social environment which affords man the freedom and opportunity to develop all his potentialities. Cultural values can be produced by free souls. So Roy penetrates through all abstractions to reach the root of society in individual beings. The aim of Roy is to attain the values like truth and freedom which preserve the integrity of the individual. To stress the importance of these two aspects of his philosophy, Roy gives it the name ‘Radical Humanism’.

Roy expresses his humanist philosophy in a comprehensive two volume work entitled, ‘Reason, Romanticism and Revolution’. He considers ‘reason’ and ‘romanticism’ as two essential forces in revolution. Roy’s strong belief in the creativeness and freedom of man is the essence of a romantic view of life. Roy says with confidence, “man has created something great, he is destined to create something still greater. That is our hope.” With this faith and confidence, Roy develops his new philosophy. His humanist philosophy can guide man to that ideal society consisting of spiritually free individuals. The spiritually free individuals are those who represent their own conscience. Roy
describes the ideal revolutionary movement as: “A brotherhood of man attracted by the adventure of ideas, keenly conscious of the urge for freedom, fired with the vision of a free society of free man, and motivated by the will to remake the world, so to restore the individual in his position of primacy and dignity, which will show the way out of the contemporary crisis of modern civilization.”

In his Radicalism, Roy considers individual freedom from all aspects. He considers freedom not only from the political aspect but also from the social, economic and moral aspects. It is essentially a philosophy of freedom and free-thinking. Individual freedom is the end of his Radical Humanism. But he strongly holds that this end cannot be attained by any means. Roy rejects the famous dictum ‘The end justifies means’. For him, good end can be realized by good means. In this regard, he has similarity with Gandhian thought. Only such means can be used which are consistent with the end and which can actually lead to the desired end. A moral end cannot be realized by immoral means. “Just as in logic, truth cannot be reached from false proposition, so also a moral ideal cannot be attained through immoral means. To entertain such a hope is to run after a mirage.”

Roy’s Radical Humanism can be considered as a positive philosophy. Its principles are to inspire man to reach higher and higher positions in life. Roy tries to teach man to shape his destiny with his own hands by using every
possibility available with him. He holds that the root of goodness and nobility is in man himself and tries to make man conscious of it. In his Radicalism, Roy shows that solution of the social problem is not primarily in laws and regulation, but in the conscience of man, in his rational self and ethical sense. So he feels that a reassessment of man has become vitally necessary for reconstructing the social culture. He tries to improve society by improving men personally by making them good and noble, rational and moral. As such, the Philosophy of Roy can be considered as an activist philosophy.

3.2 Freedom as Supreme value

In his Radicalism, Roy accepts ‘freedom as a supreme value from which all human values are derived’. He believes freedom as the supreme value because the urge for freedom is the essence of human existence. He defines his concept of freedom as follows: “The function of life is to live. The basic incentive of organic becoming is the struggle for survival. It goes on throughout the long process of biological evolution, until in man it becomes the conscious urge for freedom- the supreme human value. The beginning of man’s endless struggle for freedom lies in the animalistic struggle for survival. Everything that man has done; everything that includes his acts, cultural progress, scientific achievement, artistic creations - everything has been motivated by that urge. Man is finite while the universe is infinite, and from the ultimate standpoint, his environment
is the whole universe. Consequently, his struggle for freedom is eternal; he can never conquer the universe. Therefore, the urge for freedom is the only eternal thing in the human world. This urge enables man to acquire knowledge; he conquers his environment by knowing.” So it is observed that Roy takes freedom as a human urge. He says “man’s struggle for freedom is a continuation of the biological struggle for survival on a higher level. At a lower level, it signifies man’s struggle for the satisfaction of his mundane wants. At the higher level, struggle for existence signifies quest for freedom. The quest for freedom is purposive. When struggle for existence takes place with this ‘purposive’ on the human level of evolution, we call it quest for freedom.” So ‘what man is’ is due to his quest for freedom.

It implies that freedom, according to Roy is a process and not a complete idea. Therefore, he considers freedom as gradual disappearance of the several obstacles to open out of the potentialities biologically inherent in man. It implies that the manifold obstacles cannot be rooted out at once; they can be removed progressively. Some people consider Roy’s concept of freedom as narrow and negative as it refers to the disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of potentialities of individuals. It does not include the presence of conditions favourable to the development of human potentialities. But it cannot be accepted. Because, he does not refer to the favourable conditions as they do not hinder our freedom. His main concern is the unfolding of potentialities. So
he says that the essence of freedom lies in the unfolding of the potentialities latent in man, but these potentialities are not divine in character but biologically inherent in man. As such, “freedom has not simply a political or economic content; it refers to the all-sided development of man’s intellectual and other human potentialities.”10 Again, Roy does not consider freedom as an ideal to be attained at a particular point of time. He considers it as an experience to be made in every moment of life. Roy supports the memorable declarations made by Tilak that ‘Man is born free’ and ‘freedom is his birth-right’.

For Roy, freedom is self-determination. It is realized by those who are aware of it. It is a driving force of culture and higher standards of life. It should be understood in the context of happiness. Freedom can protect human happiness and also promotes human personality. Freedom has a great emotional force. So, in the pursuit of happiness, man should consider all those things which help man to attain his freedom in his struggle with the environment. Roy’s concept of freedom is very close to many of the great thinkers on the subject. Prof. Maclver has said “freedom is a part of human personality- a product of culture.”11 In other words, for our knowledge and understanding, freedom can no more be defined but to realize. “It is a general term the core of which is an opportunity for man to make the most of himself in the fragment of the world about him.”12 In another way – liberty involves the continued existence of open possibilities of choice. In other words -the
condition of liberty in any area of experience implies that several alternatives of action remain open.

It should be noted that Roy is not satisfied with physical freedom alone. He recognizes the necessity of intellectual freedom with it and considers intellectual freedom as one of the most desirables for human happiness and cultural progress. He places intellectual freedom at the top in the structure of freedom. “He became a life-long fighter against all those forces which make man mentally and intellectually slavish.” It shows that Roy’s love for freedom is unique.

His concept of freedom is based on practical experience and observations. So freedom for him is not mere imagination and speculation. Roy further holds that freedom is not a granted gift given by any authority to anybody. It is to be acquired by oneself. One has to feel freedom in every walk of one’s life. Otherwise, it can be gradually lost. So Roy tries to make people constantly aware of their rights and liberties. Roy is very serious regarding individual freedom. He develops his political philosophy on the basis of freedom.

Roy believes that freedom gives man the power to anticipate and to establish values. He holds that with the guidance of these values, man can engage in social activities and become a useful citizen. These activities embrace the legal and political aspects and also human interest, their abilities and
ambitions. This concept of freedom resembles the Greek view which embraces the whole human life and human aspirations.

Roy does not consider freedom as a utopia. He tries to define scope and limits of freedom. In this regard he says, "Freedom is not a beautiful castle built in the air of imagination. It rests on the triple pillars of humanism, individualism and rationalism."\textsuperscript{14} He does not advocate absolute or unlimited liberty for the individual. He is well aware of the effects of allowing absolute or unlimited freedom to the individual. In his words: "The individual does not have the freedom to do whatever he likes- this would nullify the basic purpose of freedom and society."\textsuperscript{15} In enjoying freedom one has to think of the others. It shows that there is a synthesis of both egoistic and altruistic tendency in Roy's philosophy.

Roy expresses a very realistic outlook in another point as well. Generally it is believed that men are not free under a foreign rule. But Roy realizes that the presence of the foreigners cannot enslave a nation precisely because the mere absence of foreigners cannot make a nation free. "It makes no difference whether the relation of exploitation is between men born in the same country or those born in different countries."\textsuperscript{16} It shows that Roy makes a very minute analysis about freedom of the individual. It is due to his concern about freedom of the individual and the dignity of human personality. He says: "Radicalism thought in terms of neither of nation nor of class - its concern is man; it
considers freedom as freedom of the individual." Roy holds that the individual alone could experience freedom.

It is seen that Roy gives supreme importance on the individual man and disregards subordination of man to any external authority. Non-submission to any higher power is the essence of freedom. Roy deals with the concept of freedom of the individual from the very root and realizes that freedom is conditional upon self-realization of the individual. When man feels himself to be his own master, he can shape his own destiny. He then tries to remake the world in co-operation with other equally free individuals in which he can fully realize himself. Roy tries to make man free of the concept of super-human because only then can man realize sovereignty of reason inherent in them. He says that as man exists and develops in the context of society and nature, his reason must comply with the harmony of nature. Determinism is reason in nature. Reason is the operation of physical determinism on psychological being. Rationalism frees man from all irrational authorities. Thus freedom follows from the rationalistic nature of man.

Roy believes that freedom must be extensive as much as possible. In this regard, we can mention the name of Thomas Hobbes, the western philosopher, who thought that it is right and reasonable for man to do whatever is necessary for the preservation of his own existence. For Roy, everybody should be able to enjoy the natural and civil rights. Social and human development will also be
possible under such conditions. “Freedom is supposed to have a vital place in
any civilized society. Because, man is the measure of everything and the quest
for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human
progress.”\(^{18}\)

But freedom is a positive concept which implies a balance between
excess and insufficiency. It lies in the relation between the rights and privileges
of one’s own self and of others. In Roy’s words, “freedom should be taken as a
positive concept whatever the problems and difficulties might be.”\(^ {19}\) Roy
considers freedom as a positive quality of human behaviour which helps in
smooth, normal satisfaction of all needs within the context of given cultural
pattern. He feels that man can claim to be free only in a self contained, self
operating and self-sufficient world. Freedom can be considered as surplus value
over and above the unavoidable rule, norm and restrictions to which we have to
submit. Roy says that his concept of freedom is not an abstract idea. In his
words “Freedom is not an empty concept; nor is it a vague ideal. It is the choice
for action. The greater the latitude of choice, the nearer we come to
freedom”.\(^ {20}\) It implies that Roy whole-heartedly fights for individual freedom.
3.3 Determinism

Human nature is largely determined by the process of his origin. It is basically determined by two factors, namely, first, by law-governed physical universe, and, secondly, his animal ancestry.

3.3.1 Physical Determinism

As man occupies an important place in Radical Humanism, it is based on the critical study of human nature. As a result, it is found that human nature is largely determined by the process of his origin. To Roy, as man is an object in nature, he is also law-governed like other material objects. This law-governedness makes man rational. Due to this, he understands that whatever happens in the world must have a cause and something cannot come out of nothing in an abrupt way. According to Roy, "Reason is the simple, instinctive notion that every object of experience is connected with some other object or objects which may or may not have been already experienced." Thus Roy derives the rationality of man from the rationality of physical world. By this he tries to establish that rationality of man is secular in character. It needs not be confused with any mysterious divine spark in human beings. The essential principle on which the philosophy of Radical Humanism is based is that human nature is rational. Roy considers reason as inherent in the biological being of
men. Man, due to his highly developed brain is conscious of this reason in nature and thinks that everything happens as a consequence of something else. The experience of a law governed world has made the thinking process of man also law-governed and rational. In this context, there may be an apprehension that law-governedness may give rise to a feeling of fatalism in man rather than rationalism. If everything in the physical world is determined by inexorable and mechanical laws, then human life is also determined in this way. However, Roy recognizes a fundamental difference between the physical universe and human nature. In physical nature, law is inherent in itself. But man possesses will, so he can choose. Human rationality must always be understood only with reference to freedom to choose. Roy says, “Man can be reasonable not in the context of law-governed universe but only when he is confronted with the problem of choice”.

For Roy, human will is the expression of reason in nature. This shows that Roy tries to reconcile freedom of will and determinism in nature. Hegel the western philosopher expressed Roy’s attempt of reconciliation in his words, “Roy reconciles freedom of will and determinism of natural law when he says: ‘man can control destiny, provided that he progressively rises to the realization of his participation in the rational process of nature.” Roy tries to reconcile determinism with free will by making the human will as one of the determining factors of history. Roy recognizes the influence of environment upon man. But he holds that man is not fully determined by environment. He can make
changes to the environment with the materials, at his disposal. Though man’s power is limited, it is the only active force which gives shape to history. Thus in Roy, “rationalism is not a metaphysical concept; it is identified with physical determinism.”

3.3.2 Animal Ancestry

Another factor which determines human nature is his animal ancestry. It is seen that the most significant urge among the animal is the urge for existence. Every animal wants to exist and tries to adjust himself to the environment. Like this, in man also, there is the urge for existence. Man does not simply want to exist but also to prosper, to express himself fully and unfold all the potentialities latent in him. This urge of man to express himself in different directions has been called by Roy ‘the urge for freedom’. So this urge for freedom has a biological origin since it is a continuation of animal urge for existence. The urge for freedom is the urge of the individual to unfold his potentialities. Roy defines ‘freedom’ as “progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals as human beings.” For Roy, man tries to adjust himself to the environment for his existence and prosperity. But man also tries to change the environment to create conditions favourable for his development. And due to his developed brain, man can change the environment and can also know the laws of nature.
As man's knowledge of nature increases, he can progressively free himself from the tyranny of natural phenomena. Urge for freedom thus leads man to a search for knowledge. Knowledge gives man power to create conditions suitable for his existence and for the development of his potentialities. This urge for freedom is the source for human progress. Roy recognized the role of knowledge in realizing the freedom of man.

Roy is very much concerned with the freedom of the individual being. So he is very profound in his thought about it. But to realize freedom, man must have knowledge. So, in his radical humanism, ideas are given a decisive role. Ideas are the expressions of the reasoning power of man. He however thinks that action to be fruitful must be guided by clear ideas. With clear ideas, man can understand a situation. For clear ideas, man needs positive knowledge. It is knowledge which conforms to growth and expansion of experience. Roy feels that there is an influence of the environment on human ideas. But ideas also inspire man to change his environment. Thus Radical Humanism recognizes creative role of ideas and intelligence. Man with his ideas and ideals play the most dynamic role in making history. According to Roy, the future of man is not predetermined. There are different alternative choices before man. Human ideas and intelligence will determine the particular way in which human history will move. In this regard, Radical humanism rejects the theory of divine omnipotence and economic determinism of Marx.
3.4 Problems of Freedom

Though the primary aim of Roy's Radical Humanism is to establish individual freedom, he acknowledges the existence of some problems in achieving it. Actually, Roy makes a very minute analysis of the concept of freedom and observes certain problems in realizing it. He mentions the problem in the following way:

'In early primitive ages, human mind and intellect were fully influenced by religious myth. Roy believes that religious feeling deprives man of his rational ability. People accept that beliefs credited to superstition, blind faith are true. Thus religious influence deprives man of his intellectual freedom. At this stage, no rational progress of mind is possible. Therefore, religion is his most important target of assault to establish freedom'.

Another problem Roy observes in the case of freedom is the modern concept of freedom which is foreign to the Indian people in a certain stage of evolution. They cannot conceive of freedom which is depicted as the spectre of isolated, helpless, lonesome individuals. It is also depicted as immorality, irreligiosity and Godlessness. As such, it is repugnant to the people who are traditionally accustomed to rely for everything on supernatural power.

Interestingly, this general absence of the appreciation of the concept of freedom is found even in contemporary India. So fighting for freedom appears
to be a paradox. But this apparent paradox results from a combination of circumstances. There are mainly three factors involved:

First, though living chronologically in the twentieth century, the majority of Indian population historically, socially and culturally lags several hundred years behind. They live under such social and cultural conditions that do not allow freedom to the individual. They believe life to be a succession of predetermined events beyond the control of man. So people are subordinated to super human authority. This super human authority is adored as the highest human value. Under this condition, the very idea of freedom cannot be conceived.

Secondly, Roy observes that inadequate and negative nature of freedom of the capitalist society help in reinforcing the medieval man’s fear of freedom. Again, people who condemn the western civilization also seek to discredit the idea of freedom without considering the positive value associated with them.

Thirdly, due to the lack of education, the very idea of a positive freedom or rational freedom cannot be conceived except by a very few.

So Roy realizes that to overcome this situation, education is very much essential. Roy beholds freedom in a comprehensive sense. He considers freedom from all aspects of life.
3.5 Role of Education

Roy recognizes the role of education in realizing freedom. For him, liberty must be associated with knowledge. He holds that without knowledge, liberty will be misleading and harmful. Knowledge broadens the outlook of man and strengthens his desire to be free. Knowledge is not only power, it also leads to freedom. Earlier, man was in bondage socially, politically and morally due to the lack of proper knowledge. Knowledge has been responsible for the discovery of a tremendous amount of truth. It widens the limits of experience and frees man to that extent. Roy states, “Truth is the centre of knowledge and the freedom which knowledge confers on man is the freedom to live up to his creative role to shape his world to his purpose to discover and develop all potentialities in him.” So, Roy holds that a people to be free, they must be educated. To be free, man must first have the clear knowledge about himself and also the conditions in which he lives. Roy says, “Only when man has a clear picture of himself, of his place in nature, will he be able to shape his own creation so that it will enable him to fulfil his basic urge for freedom.” In this respect, Roy has some similarities with Rousseau the political philosopher. Rousseau was not in favour of formal education. For Rousseau, formal education hampers a child’s natural growth. Rousseau holds that a child should be allowed to grow according to his nature in a natural environment and only then can he realize the truth. Children can learn more from nature than books. It indicates that Roy
is very realistic in dealing with the problems of freedom. Roy strongly contends that the place of power in the hands of ignorant people will kill the very spirit of freedom. Therefore, to have freedom, education must be given top priority in any culture. But mere expansion of knowledge and education will not be enough. Education must make man aware of his rights and liberties. Knowledge will lead man to revolt against those forces which deprive him of his legitimate liberties. Roy is a hardcore advocate of freedom which is reflected in his words that man must fight and revolt without considering the loss and consequences. For Roy, freedom of the individual must consist in the fullest development of all his potentialities on this earth. The purpose of all rational activities of human being is to attain freedom in an ever increasing measure. It shows that Roy is very progressive in his thinking.

Roy feels that society to a great extent is influenced by knowledge, religion, art, culture and their critical studies. A cultured life includes human interests, human ambitions, and human abilities. In Roy’s words, “in this way, the history of freedom embraces the whole history of man.” He tries to explain man not only in the context of the society, but the entire human life and the whole universe on the basis of an integrated picture of knowledge.

But Roy observes that gradually man has lost faith in his power. It is due to the extreme centralization of power in the hands of a few. Moreover, exploitation, corruption, struggles and conflicts have also undermined men’s
faith in their ability. The common people used to believe that they are
determined and totally controlled by the society. They have no power to change
the course of evolution. Roy feels that social stagnation and cultural crisis arise
as a result of this attitude of thoughts. So he tries to make men aware of their
power, to make them realize that society is their own creation and, therefore,
they can change it. But Roy realizes that this is possible only through an
educational movement. Roy states, “Education in this context means such
intellectual and cultural development of the members of a community which
make them feel the urge for freedom and consciousness of their power to attain
it by progressive approximation.”\textsuperscript{29} So, by education, Roy does not mean the
stereotyped education that is imparted in our conventional educational
institutions. This type of education does not stimulate independent and critical
thinking in man. It does not generate in man a sense of faith in himself. So, Roy
feels the need for an educational movement to regain man’s faith on himself. By
educational movement, Roy means a movement which would awaken, first the
urge for freedom in man and make his vision clear. It will develop in man a
rational outlook, a sense of morality and an attitude of co-operation. According
to Roy, “Education for democracy does not consist of teaching just reading and
writing, but in making the people conscious of their humanness; to make them
conscious of their rights to exist as human beings, in decency and dignity, to
help them to think, to apply their reasons.”\textsuperscript{30} From Roy’s explanation of
freedom, it can be said that like the classical Indian philosophers, Roy does not consider freedom as something to be attained; it is to be realized. There is an urge for freedom within man. His only purpose is to make men aware of this urge by education. So his vision is very practical.

Roy observes that this educational movement would bring about a philosophical revolution which "involves a radical readjustment in the outlook and attitude of a decisively large section of the common people." He feels that without a philosophical revolution, no significant social change towards freedom is possible. A new society presupposes new man with new ideas and ideals. 'In the course of history, spiritual revolts have always preceded great social changes. Mental freedom has necessarily been the precondition for any attempt to attain political and economic freedom'. Thus Roy recognizes the necessity of mental freedom in association with social, political and economic freedom.

Another important thing Roy notices is that freedom of man depends on his outlook. He realizes that the outlook of man cannot be changed by outward imposition of law. The best of law would not work and the best of institution would remain useless if the minds of the people are not prepared for it. Before setting up a new institution, it should be known whether the people want it or not. Laws and institutions cannot automatically bring about necessary changes in the outlook of man. Man is controlled by his own will. Education, rational
analysis, critical thought and experience lead to changes in the outlook of the mind. Laws and institutions become stable and effective when they are made in the image of new ideas. Therefore, Roy feels that a revolution covering all aspects like - educational, political and economic must begin along with a Cultural Revolution. Roy tries to do away with the distinction between the rulers and the ruled. But without intellectual and moral development of the people, such an ideal can never be realized. That is why Roy very often refers to Plato the Greek philosopher who considered education as the precondition for democracy.

3.6 Co-operative Individualism

The philosophy of Roy's Radical Humanism may be considered as an individualist philosophy. For Radicalism, the will to acquire freedom is an urge of the individual. Individual man and woman alone can feel this urge. But this Individualism is different from the individualism of the liberal philosophers of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century liberalism was based on the concept of the 'economic man'. According to it, every man wanted to promote his own economic interest to the maximum possible degree and thought that maximum social welfare would be secured if every individual is allowed to follow his economic interests without any hindrance. The liberalist thinkers thought that every individual was engaged in a struggle for existence and they
should work out to their destiny without any external aid or control. This implies survival of the fittest and this would make sure of social progress. But Roy holds that the concept of ‘economic man’ nullifies the liberating doctrine of individualism. Although man is selfish and wants to look after his own interests, as a rational being, he, at the same time realizes that it is not possible for a single individual to promote his welfare adequately without the co-operation of other people. Therefore, man voluntarily co-operates with others. Society and other institutions are all expressions of this co-operative spirit of man. Roy holds that social progress is largely due to this co-operative spirit of man and not due to any struggle between individuals or classes. So Roy’s individualism may be called co-operative individualism. Roy observes that although the physical world exists independently of man, by understanding its law, man can change it for his welfare. But the social world with its political system and economic order is wholly a creation of man. Roy thinks that man creates society, the state and all other institutions and organizations of the society for promoting his own freedom. From Roy’s explanation, it is clear that Roy denies absolutism in all aspects of life.

3.7 Society and Individual

Regarding the origin of society and state, Roy writes, “It logically follows from the theory of evolution that mankind, at a low level of development,
existed before society and the state came into being; and these are human creations. The society and the state were created by mankind for the promotion of its welfare. And the welfare of society is the sum total of the welfare enjoyed individually by its members."

There are two views regarding the relationship between the individual and the society. First, the individual can be considered as a part of the society in which he lives and as such, he must adjust himself to the needs of the society. Secondly, the individual can be considered as a primary factor in society, he can be taken as the creator of all social factors.

Roy believes in the second one and as such, considers man as the primary factor in society. Without man, there cannot be society at all. It is necessary and logical that man is more important than society itself. Roy states, "Because, man is the measure of everything, and quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge for human progress; to fulfil this urge, man, as the maker of his world, must shape his society as a suitable environment for the pursuit and attainment of freedom." Man created society and various social institutions for his own welfare. So whenever these established social orders stand in the way of his further development, man tries to change it and set up a better social system. Roy's main concern is man; not the nation or any class. He conceives freedom as the freedom of the individual. Roy feels that the individual has lost his freedom in the slogans raised in the name of the state and
society. So he holds that man is the central force without which the society cannot move. All freedom therefore must be based on the individual. A social relation will be stable only if this relation can promote the liberty and purpose of the individuals. Man has natural rights and liberties and these must be protected. If these rights and liberties are ignored, the main purpose of the society or any organization will fail. So Roy is very much concerned about the rights and liberties of the individual man. Every social organization should try its best to protect these rights. The misunderstanding about the proper relationship between the individual and various groups has caused many problems in the history of human freedom. In Roy's word, "Any civilized society must try to offer the individuals their quota of freedom so that in the final analysis, the society itself will prosper and be free."³⁴

As Roy very minutely deals with the problems of freedom, he observes that though society, the state and all other social organizations and institutions are the creations of man, they sometimes appear to be hurdles for human freedom. It is because these institutions have come to be controlled only by a few persons. Originally, the state was an organization of the people to promote their own freedom. But later on, it led to the subordination of many by a few. Roy says, "The growing complexity of the social and political organization has correspondingly increased the degree of the subordination of the individual."³⁵

In modern times, concentration of power is found in every aspect of social life.
Roy thinks it to be one of the greatest hurdles for human freedom. So he wants to change this system and tries to make man the master of the society and not its slave. He tries to replace the present centralized society by a free and open one. He judges every social institution by the extent to which it promotes the freedom of the individuals who constitute the society. To reconcile freedom with social organization, Roy tries to construct a society on the basis of pluralism, decentralization and democracy. He feels that the individuals will be able to assert themselves and would feel themselves to be important in a simple, decentralized social unit. Although Roy prefers decentralization, he feels the necessities of centralization of power to a certain extent in an advanced society of modern times. But Roy also realizes that mere decentralization and pluralism would not secure freedom if the society does not work in the true democratic spirit. For Roy, democratic spirit is vital for reconciling individual freedom with social organization. By this, Roy tries to keep the dignity of the individual intact. He also tries to establish the role of each individual in the society.

3.8 Reconstruction of Economic Life

Roy also wants to reconstruct economic life of the society on the basis of the principles of co-operation, democracy and decentralization. He considers material prosperity as an essential condition for individual freedom. Roy states,
"Progressive satisfaction of material necessities is the precondition for the individual members of society unfolding their intellectual and other finer human potentialities." Therefore, "Radical Democracy presupposes economic reorganization of society so as to eliminate the possibility of exploitation of man by man." For Roy, economic security is indispensable for the free development of personality. He holds, economic security has no significance without political and cultural freedom. In this sense, economic security is the means and freedom is the end. If the pursuit of economic security leads to the denial of freedom, it loses all its value. Any change in the case of the society or the state is acceptable if it leads to freedom.

Roy is against the economic system of capitalism, communism or socialism. For him, capitalism was not acceptable in India at that period. He disregards communism and socialism as they de-recognize individual freedom. Thus economic prosperity does not necessarily follow from Socialism and Communism. Observing these, Roy visualizes a new form of economic organization to which he gave the name of "Co-operative economy". In this economic system, the major position of economic activities - both production and distribution would be done through co-operatives. In the co-operatives, there is no distinction between the owner and workers. Here machine would surely be used to increase production. But machine must remain directly under human control. Man should not be reduced to the status of a slave of the
machine. Roy prefers the development of industries in a decentralized manner. He thinks, it would perhaps be economical. For him, small scale industries are not incompatible with technological efficiency. In Roy's philosophy, efficiency is not an end in itself. He would never allow individual freedom to be ignored in the name of technical efficiency. As Roy puts it, "By disregarding individual freedom on the pleas of taking the full advantage of technology, of efficiency and collective effort, planned economy defeats its own purpose." Roy is not against planning per se but he is against planning made by a few persons. Bodies that people organize locally must be given full opportunities to formulate and execute their own plans. That would reconcile planning with freedom. Roy states, "Machine should not be the Frankenstein of modern civilization. Created by man, it must sub-serve man's purpose- contribute to his freedom."

It is observed that in advocating a new system or change, Roy does not ignore freedom of the individual man. Roy favours the active participation of the individuals in various developmental activities.

It is to be noted that Roy and his group do not simply visualize a new social order with individual freedom, but also suggested means and methods to realize it. It is based on the firm belief that man can change the present social system and create a better society. Radical Humanist holds, "The function of a revolutionary and liberating social philosophy is to lay emphasis on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world." It has already been noted
that man has formed the society and various social institutions for his welfare and changed them in various ways to further his own interests. Therefore, man has the power to replace the present society by a better one which would be more favourable to harness his own potentialities.

In fact, Roy tries to make a compromise between freedom and duty of the individual. So, he does not talk about absolute freedom. To him, the individual has to play a double role - he must successfully retain his freedom and also perform his part of duty as a member of a society. In this respect, he has to fulfil his social obligation. In fulfilling one's own interest, one should always take care of the interest of others. One cannot do things which will put majority of the people in a society face losses. From this, it appears that though Roy advocates individual freedom he does not ignore social obligation. He holds that freedom is to be taken as a balance between popular will and the individual will. Roy never says that a Radical Humanist society is bound to exist or it is an inevitable stage of social evolution. He only maintains that Radical Humanist society is consistent with the ideal of freedom.

3.9 Radical Democracy

Roy is considered as a political philosopher of a high order. Roy's concept of freedom will not be complete without discussing it in a political context. Roy
is against power politics. He accepts democracy, but not parliamentary democracy. According to Roy, democracy is based upon individual freedom and makes individual freedom compatible with social organization. So he holds that democracy should be introduced not only in the state but in all organizations. Our family system, economic organizations and educational institutions should function democratically. But he is against parliamentary democracy in which power is captured by a party. In his words, "the concentration of power which results from party politics must also be prevented since it is a persistent obstacle to individual freedom." For him, political parties are the chief evils in modern democracy for they are the main cause of the concentration of power. Actually in a democracy, power belongs to the people and not to the party. In parliamentary democracy, the single individual citizen is powerless for all practical purposes, and he also has no means to exercise his sovereignty. Therefore, Roy wants to replace parliamentary democracy by a new kind of democracy which he named, Radical Democracy. It is based upon the ideal of sovereignty of the people. The basic feature of Radical Democracy is that the people must have ways and means to exercise sovereign power effectively and not simply indirectly through election. For this, he favours the organization of people's committee of each locality which would act as the local parliament with the power to discuss all the problems facing the country. He says that people's committee would exercise real power on district council, provincial
assembly and the national parliament and this would ultimately be guided by these committees of the people. Instead of conventional parliamentary democracy, the government should be based on a pyramidal structure of democratic bodies composed of countrywide network of peoples. According to Roy, democracy can be real only when the state is based on the edifice of local republics. It implies that Roy realizes the need of rationalized politics. He feels that the fundamental democratic principle – the *greatest good of the greatest number* can be possible only when the conduction of public affairs will be in charge of spiritually free individuals. Roy also holds that the conscience of the people who run the good government must be held accountable, pertaining to their work. Only then can they do well for others.

According to Roy, democracy is possible by the creation of certain conditions. There must be a conscious and integrated effort to arouse amongst people, the urge for freedom, the desire to rely upon themselves, the spirit of free thinking and the will never to submit to any external authority by exchanging their freedom for the security of their lives. Thus, in Roy’s radicalism, political action becomes converted to philosophical action and struggle for power changed into a quest for moral values.

Roy was very much concerned with individual freedom and he did not want to compromise individual freedom in any situation.
3.10 Moral Values

Ethics plays an important role in Roy’s philosophy. He emphasizes on the restoration of ethical values. He holds that social progress is not possible without the restoration of moral values in the inter-personal life of man. In his words, “Ethics must be given a high place in social philosophy, including political thought, if the crying need of honesty and decency in public life is ever to be satisfied.” He explains that as a product of nature, man is inherently rational, and morality develops out of rationality. Man’s rationality and moral sense which are causally connected are expressions of cosmic harmony. From this it follows, “it is in the nature of man as a biological organism, to be rational and moral, and as such he is capable of living with others in peace and harmony.”

Morality results from man’s intelligent response to his surroundings. Therefore, Roy concludes that morality can be deduced from his innate rationality. In his words, “Values are sui generis; they are born in our conscience; they are not deduced from facts.” Roy rejects the possibility of any revealed wisdom and also the claims of spiritualism. Morality should not be based on the fear of God. Morality is rational but not supernatural or mystical. Morality must be voluntary and spontaneous. Roy says, “A harmonious social order is possible, because man is rational. Harmony is another name for morality. Morality and rationality are the two sides of the same coin.” Men will be moral if they can respect themselves and remain loyal to their own conscience. Roy identifies moral
instinct with the urge for freedom as well. In this regard he says that in any revolutionary social philosophy sovereignty of man must be recognized. Man must be taken as a moral entity; not merely a biological one.

Roy divides moral values into two categories—changing values and basic values. Some values are dependent upon social conditions as such these would change with the changes in the society. There are some other values which are accepted as basic human values inspite of growing human experience and knowledge. These moral values are considered as eternal and immutable as these are not causally dependent upon changing conditions of life belonging to a particular period of history. Besides, Roy holds that moral values must have moral justification. It need not be divine and mystical. It implies that Roy is an advocate of secular morality. He realizes that ethical progress of man not only requires the development of his reasoning power but also training of the emotions. It shows that Roy stresses on the rational nature of man although his action may be both rational and irrational. He may think that as man is considered as a rational being, his irrational nature can be subordinated to his reason.

According to Roy, like social world, the moral world - the world of values is also a creation of man. In his words—"Politics cannot be divorced from ethics without jeopardizing the cherished ideal of freedom." It is seen that Roy tries to base moral values upon the rationality of man. Regarding the origin of moral
values, he writes, “One knows from experience what is good for him and what is bad for him. Therefore he generalizes that what is good for him is good for all like himself, and what is bad for him is also bad for all. That is the origin of morality.”

Moral values are those principles which a man should observe for his own welfare and also for the proper and undisturbed functioning of the society. Roy asserts, ‘New Humanism says that the desire to be moral is inherent in man, and it is because, this desire results from man’s innate rationality’.

Roy believes that so long as man is accountable to his conscience, he cannot be immoral. The only way to make man moral is to make him conscious of his own rationality and social responsibility. Man will be moral if he can respect himself and remain loyal to his own conscience. Roy retains immense faith in man amidst so much of corruption and dishonesty, because he thinks that man is essentially rational and potentially moral. Roy holds that without freedom, moral values have no meaning. To observe moral values, one must be free. For Roy, freedom is the highest ideal, because only a free man can have the fullest joy of living. Freedom is the condition for the self-realization.
3.11. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is observed that the main objective of Roy's Radical Humanism is individual freedom. He holds that only a free individual can build a society of freedom and equality. Many earlier philosophers also dealt with this problem, but the difference is that Roy dealt with this problem on a very comprehensive scale. He says that considering freedom from any one aspect would be misleading. Moreover, he is very analytical and creative in his explanation of freedom. He examines every facet of the concept of freedom and also the problem faced by individual human being. Actually, he possesses a true spirit of fighting for freedom for the individual. Lenin described Roy as 'the symbol of revolution in the east'.

Another important thing to be noted of Roy's humanism is his open-mindedness and acceptability. He believes that opinion will undergo changes with further experience and further study. So he does not offer a stamp of finality, so far as the truth is concerned. It contains nothing which cannot be accommodated with growing experience. It is essentially a philosophy of freedom and free-thinking.

Moreover, Roy has great courage of accepting truth learnt from his own experience without the least botheration of the comment of others. He has the courage to express his opinion whether it is agreeable or not. Otherwise, he would not have dared to formulate a new political concept criticizing
parliamentary democracy which was favoured by majority of the people of India at that time. This led to some of his critics believe that Roy fails to appreciate the value of emotion in human affairs. But this is not correct because his emotional character is observed in his explanation of the concept of individual freedom. He realizes that without emotion, life would be dull. But he also holds that emotion is to be kept under the guidance of reason. In this regard, he says that the cause of the present crisis is due to the preponderance of emotion over rational and critical analysis.

There is a basic difference between Roy's concept of freedom and that of other thinkers. Many of the earlier advocates of freedom considered the problem as a political issue. But Roy considers it as a biological problem. This means that Roy considers the issue as a more basic and fundamental one. He says, "If man, as a biological being was not possessed of infinite potentialities of development, freedom would be a vain dream and ideal never to be realized. It can be claimed as birth right of man only when the struggle for it is known to be a biological heritage". 48

But it should be noted that though in the contemporary world, the ideal of freedom is professed by all political parties, their ideal is confined to speech and slogan, which are not effective in practice. In practice, individual freedom is subordinated to the need of organization. But it is Roy who fought for it in a true sense. His real intention was to discover some form of government wherein
the individual freedom is not subordinated to any collective ego. He tries to materialize it through his Radical Humanism. He sacrificed his political career for this purpose. In the words of B.N. Dasgupta, “Roy remains unparalleled in the realm of human affairs as an exponent at a time when particularly the east and some countries of the west were passing through feverish turmoil for self-determination and emancipation.”

Another important thing Roy realizes for individual freedom is the role of education. Every political party talks about the necessity of education and also introduces various new schemes in this field but they are not successful in the true sense of the term, due to the absence of a sense of sincerity. But Roy has made a deep observation in this field and realizes that the purpose of education is not merely to provide formal teaching but to make man aware of his potentialities, his rights and liberties and make his vision clear.

It is observed from the above discussion that Roy has great faith on human reason. But in fact, it is not true because human reason is not as perfect as Roy thinks it to be. In this regard, we can say that though he has great faith in man, he does not overlook the irrationality and immorality prevailing in the society. He feels that as a rational being, man can improve himself and behave rationally and morally.

The Philosophy of Roy is unique as it is based on facts which conform to scientific thoughts. Again, it is based on his immense practical work as he was
engaged in the actual work of remaking the social order. Roy never claims his philosophy as absolutely new. He admits that he has taken some ideas from the thoughts of earlier philosophers. But in his Humanism, Roy tries to bring the best of different philosophical systems like communism, humanism, individualism and makes a synthesis of them on the basis of the practical experience of Indian political, social and cultural context. The most significant thing in Roy is that he tries to combine politics with philosophy. He feels that without philosophy, politics will not be successful. The important thing to be noted is that he attempts to make his view rational and realistic considering the trend of the modern world.

Another important thing in Roy’s Radicalism is his realization of accountability to one’s own conscience. Without it no system will be successful. Outward law will not make any change unless people hold their conscience accountable. It can be safely assumed that Roy’s explanation is extremely relevant in the context of the present day world.

Roy can be considered to be a selfless person with very high moral standards as he had no personal interest behind his revolution for individual freedom. He whole heartedly fought for individual freedom without considering his personal career. He realized the need of new orientation of human thinking in the conundrum of the present political, social and economic crisis.
Although M.N. Roy did not get proper recognition in his life, no one can deny the extent of his contributions as a political philosopher. It is anticipated that he will get his due respect from the new generation who reads his philosophy. But for this, his philosophical ideology is to be disseminated among the common masses.

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