Chapter 6

Leadership and Functioning Of The Movement

6.1 Introduction: Some Perspectives

Nature of leadership plays a crucial role not only in the process of launching of any movement but in sustaining it. It is the leaders who analyze the limitations of existential institutional structures of society and make an attempt to bring about institutional change by inspiring others, mobilizing resources, devising strategies and influencing the final outcome (Morris and Staggenborg 2002). Leaders can be defined as strategic decision makers who inspire and organize others to participate in social movements. Therefore sociological study of any social movement calls for empirical analyses of personality traits, nature and functioning of its leadership. Though the issue of leadership has been discussed in terms of personality traits and their role in final outcome of various social movements of specific leaders like Gandhi, Lenin, Mao etc., the concept of leadership in the social movements has yet to be adequately theorized as has been noted by numerous scholars (see Melucci 1996 and Morris and Staggenborg 2002). Morris and Staggenborg (2002) point out that this lacuna results from a failure to fully integrate agency and structure in theories of social movements. Focus on great leaders risks a neglect of structural opportunities and obstacles to collective action, while an emphasis on structures of opportunity risks ignoring human agency. Thus, any approach to leadership in social movements must examine the actions of leaders within structural context and recognize the myriad levels of leadership and roles of participants.

There have been many approaches to the study of leadership, which imply different techniques for identification of different kinds of leaders and their functioning
and impact. Adopting a functionalist approach we find early studies on social movements leadership (Blumer 1951 and Lang and Lang 1961), identify the functional roles filled by different types of movement leaders at different stages in development of a movement. Gusfield (1966) points out that being at the center of persistent and conflicting demands, a leader functions in both internal and external environments to deal with or serve diverse audiences in many different situations, within the movement he has to function as mobiliser, inspiring participants, and outside as an articulator linking the movement to the larger society. More recent studies (Turner and Killian 1987) have further analyzed the complexity of leadership roles at different levels within the movements, the conflicts between different leadership tasks as a leader plays a package of roles. Thus, for his movement or group, a leader plays the role of an articulator, a mobiliser, a task assigner, a morale builder, a reconciliatory, harmoniser etc. In playing these roles he may act as a radical, conservative or a reactionary. Here in this chapter an effort has been made to discover the internal and external roles and reputation of radical humanists and the social impact of these roles and reputation.

Besides analyzing the roles and functions of the leaders in social movements, researchers have also examined the ways in which leaders legitimize their authority in social movements. Most of them have by and large drawn on Weber’s theory on authority and the notions of charismatic leadership. As the focus is on personality traits in the notion of charisma, Melucci (1996) correctly argues that Weberian theory lends itself to the neglect of a social relationship between leaders and followers, viewed as giving themselves up to a charismatic leader, follows lack agency. It has been observed that more often than not, followers invariably are grateful to leaders for speaking and acting on their behalf even though leaders eventually become part of political elite whose interests are in
conflict with those of their followers. This is unavoidable as many share the view that the existence of intellectuals or the so-called educated leaders is a pre-condition to success of any revolutionary movement because masses are incapable of developing a theoretical understanding of revolutionary struggle.

Robert Michel (1962) in his theory of political leadership observes that large-scale organizations associated with large-scale parties or movements inevitably become oligarchic. However, other theorists (Zald and Ash 1966, Barker 2001) don't agree with Michel's iron law of oligarchy and argue that the shape the organizations take depends on a number of factors both internal and external to the movement. There have been several instances where we find leaders transform the organizations in radical rather than conservative directions. Leaders committed to their ideology and goals commensurate with their ideology may change the structure of the organization accordingly. Ideology however can be reactionary, conservative or radical and therefore the form the social movement organizations take may vary accordingly.

Till recently, social movement theorists have given primacy to socio-economic and political structures both in the emergence and final outcome of social movements and the movement's leadership has been viewed as a residual activity deducible from political and economic structures. Here, a key theoretical issue as has been discussed by Morris and Staggenborg (2002), is the extent to which the characteristics and actions of leaders, as opposed to structural conditions matter. Even though resource mobilization theorists as against collective behavior theorists, view leaders as political entrepreneurs, they have not examined the emergence of leadership and the ways in which the leaders affect movement strategies and outcomes. As the leaders operate within structural conditions, it is true that
A movement's structural context affects its leadership. At the same time leaders also influence greatly the final outcome of the movement, as it is the leaders who interpret the structural context and identify their weaknesses, strengths and make decisions about how they can be exploited to bring about social change for movement purposes. They carry out a complex set of activities that are crucial to the final outcome regardless of the structural conditions. It may be pointed out that in the final outcome, different leaders depending upon their personality traits and commitment to the ideology and goals of the movement, may end up pursuing their own limited aspirations and goals at the expense of the movement or vice versa and also different organizational structures will invariably produce different kinds of leaders. However, it is not our purpose here to discuss the types of leaders. Here in this chapter an attempt will be made to carry out a sociological study of RHIM through an empirical investigation of the character, structure and functioning of its leadership. As the active radical humanists are spread over various cities, a number of field trips were undertaken by this researcher in order to collect the required data and information concerning the movement. Further, a number of prominent radicals were personally contacted and interviewed with the help of an interview guide. Information from rest of the respondents was gathered through a questionnaire constructed for the purpose. Here an attempt has been made to discover the status and impact of radical humanist vis-a-vis the environment in which they operate. The researcher also participated in number of study camps and conferences of the movement and the data thus collected also throws some light on the personality orientations, styles of functioning and the class character of the leadership. A case study has also been made of some top leaders of the movement.
6.1.2. Personality orientations

As far as the leadership is concerned, as has been pointed out earlier also, Roy, who was far ahead of his associates as far as the intellect and original thinking is concerned, provided the intellectual leadership. The period between 1948-54 was completely dominated by Roy who provided the intellectual leadership to the movement. Roy, by virtue of his original thinking and dynamism provided the inspiration and guidance to his followers who were always dependent on him psychologically as is evident from Tarkunde's observation:

During the time comrade Roy was amongst us, many of us had developed the habit of looking to him for guidance and inspiration. He deprecated that attitude time and again, but the attitude persisted. This was not because we were blind hero-worshippers. But he was so much more experienced, so much more original in his thinking, so much more free from the dead weight of dogmas and previously held opinions, so much more responding to changing situations, that he was always much ahead of us. We were "Followers" simply because we could not find the way as quickly, nor walk as fast. The highly unorthodox ideas, with which he came out from his Dehradun retreat from time to time, were not accepted by us because of the will to believe; but critical examination justified them and subsequent experience to a larger extent verified them. The ideas were initially his, and became ours only later. It is true that some of us contributed to the further development of those ideas once they were propounded by him, but I think it is correct to say that whenever an occasion arose for a departure from old moorings of thought, the first step was taken by comrade Roy alone". (Tarkunde 1957: 35)

Roy, as is also evident from his writings was very unorthodox, dynamic and undogmatic in his ideas and he devoted himself to do the necessary spade work among his followers so that the movement would not become extinct and loose its revolutionary character when he is no more. It can be said that he did succeed in this mission to some extent as Ellen Roy was able to carry on the movement till her death and even today after
50 years after Roy's departure some important leaders of the movement like Prof. Sibnarayan Ray, Indumait Parikh, Inniah, Rajni Patel, R.M. Pal, Sunil Bhattacharjee and till recently late V.M. Turkunde, Gaur Kishore Ghosh, M.V. Ramamurthy, R.S. Yadav, Prem Nath Bajaj, R.L. Nigam and C.T. Daru tried to spread their humanist ideas through their writings, educational and cultural activities. At individual level they have made some impact in their respective fields of activities. Roy's followers have not only imbibed the values Roy stood for but they are trying to put these values in practice. These values have become an integral part of their personality orientations. From a sociological perspective, drawing on Weberian notion of 'routinisation of charisma', it can be said that the philosophical ideas of Roy have found institutional basis both in the individual activism and pursuits of radicals and various organizational structures created by them over a period of time. We will explore the activities and functioning of these institutional structures of the RHIM in the upcoming sections.

Behaviour of individuals and their personality orientations are invariably affected by the character of the group to which they belong. Philosophy of the RHIM being what it is, emphasizing the values of individual freedom, rationality, morality, radicals were found to be more flexible, co-operative, less aggressive, more rational and open minded in their approach. Radical humanists are deeply committed to the values of freedom, equality, secularism and are opposed to untouchability, casteism, communalism and all forms of social inequalities. The most striking feature that places radicals on a different footing is that in today's world when corruption has seeped in every aspect of life, norms of civil society have virtually broken down and when political power has become an end itself, radicals having abjured power politics can be viewed as a band of committed
Individuals who have a burning desire to keep their seminal ideas alive, multiplying and diffusing them among others in their limited way.

The leadership of RHM can be characterized as homogeneous in nature with a unity of purpose. It is homogeneous in the sense that here the leaders do not work at crosswords with each other as is seen in political parties and other organizations where different leaders are seen competing with each other to acquire monopoly of leadership and hence power. They are prepared neither to share power willingly nor the responsibility as power remains an end in itself. As we have been witnessing in our country, particularly since the era of coalition governments, leaders of almost all political parties are prepared to stoop to any level and make any number of compromises to capture power and remain in power. However in case of the leadership of RHM one can say without any doubt that it is their dedication, personal integrity and commitment to their values which distinguishes them from other political and non-political workers in the country. As RHM is primarily confined to educated urban elite the general awareness and sensitivity to issues both national and international among radicals is much greater as compared to any other political party or organization. One is particularly struck by the fact the radicals discussed various problems facing mankind in depth in an academic manner with a humanist perspective. Having briefly explored the personality orientations, we will further explore the extent to which these orientations are reflected in the activities of radical humanists.
6.1.3. Style of Functioning

Nature of leadership along with its style\(^1\) of functioning plays a crucial role not only in the process of collective mobilization in any movement but also in sustaining it. The process of recruitment tends to be diversified depending upon the qualities of the people involved. R.H.M. is characterized by what may be called collective leadership with a division of labor among different leaders on the basis of their field of operation, occupation, interests etc. It has a loose federal structure with central and regional associations, which are held together by relationship of local autonomy, and external links based on common interests of propagating the ideas of cultural renaissance. This is very different from organization of a political party or other organizations with centralized authority. Individual humanists meet frequently on local, regional and all India level to discuss common problems and plan together various programmes of activities.\(^2\) RHM can be characterized as democratic in its functioning. One feature that sets it apart from other collectivities is that individuals in these camps get along with one another on a truly friendly basis. Relations between general members of the movement with more important leaders were found to be freer, frank and spontaneous. Emphasis was laid on group discussions and invariably attempt was made to arrive at consensus regarding various issues.

Needless to say, in such situations leaders draw ideas and suggestions from the group by discussions and consultations. Leader's job is one of moderation and such a democratic leadership invariably yields better results as compared to functioning of autocratic leadership. Such a style of democratic functioning can in fact be traced back to

\(^1\) The notion of style used here refers to identifying the leadership in terms of democratic or autocratic forms of functioning.
very inception of the movement. Roy always encouraged his followers to bring new enthusiasm into the movement. Debates challenging his 22 thesis took place even while Roy was alive says Gour Kishore Ghosh. Prof. Nigam believes that Roy was essentially an educator and he could see in every individual certain potentiality, which he tried to bring to the surface and at the same time increase it. He recalls that Roy never made his associates feel insignificant and never maintained any distance with them. He cared for the personal problems and crisis of the people associated with him. Personal loyalties mattered a great deal to him. Thus democratic leadership and democratic processes such as discussions, majority rule, persuasiveness, mutual trust and co-operation are the core elements of radical's style of functioning. Leaders in such a movement are not entitled to any special privileges, as is the case with other organizations. Major decisions are made at the meetings of the entire group. Mental blocks between the leader and followers just do not exist. During the various study camps it was observed that all the participants interacted with each other on equal footing and the communication between the so called leaders and group members was a two way process and leadership entailed a great deal of responsibility like contacting members, arranging conferences and other routine procedures so that members could communicate with each other on regular basis. Unique feature of this communication system is that solution to the problems is sought not by the leader alone but often a number of brains work on it. On account of this democratic style of functioning RHM is a cohesive, closely knit group, whose members are always willing to co-operate with each other and take a constructive approach in dealing with the most complex problems confronting our society. The authoritarian personality has no place in

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2 The researcher had the opportunity to observe radicals in a number of study camps and conferences.
3 Interview with Mr Ghosh, Calcutta.
4 As reflected by Mr Nigam during my discussions and interview at Delhi.
such a movement. The leader draws ideas and suggestions from the group by discussion and consultation. Group members are encouraged to participate freely. Responsibility is also collective. Individual in a democratically led group like RHM retains his individual dignity and self-importance and is not subordinate to any group identity. Thus the leadership of RHM can be described as persuasive as against authoritarian leadership. They recognize that differences exist among individuals and it is only by setting high standards of discipline and efficiency for themselves that they can influence others and command respect for themselves and their ideas. Such is the style of functioning of the leaders involved in RHM.

6.1.4. Social Composition, Status and Role of Leadership

Studies of movement and revolutionary leaders both in the case of developed (Flocks 1971 and Oberschall 1973) and developing countries (Rajai and Phillips 1988) suggest that majority of them come from the middle and upper classes and they have more education than their followers. Even though leaders like Gandhi, Lenin, Martin Luther King and Mao led very different types of social movements, yet they were highly qualified and enjoyed at least middle class status. The social composition of leadership has definite implications for the social movement as privileged class background provides leaders not only with financial resources, more time to devote to movement activities but also social contacts often unavailable to the rank and file. Here knowledge or educational capital can be considered as the most important resource for the success of any social movement as a host of intellectual activities like interpreting structural contexts, identifying their strengths and weaknesses framing grievances, formulating ideologies, debating, devising strategies and tactics, interacting with both internal and external elites,
developing rationales for coalition building etc have to be performed and more so if the movement happens to be an ideological one like RHM striving to bring about cultural change based on 22 Theses of New Humanism.

The understanding of philosophical implication underlying 22 thesis requires one to have a high degree of intellectual understanding and knowledge from various sciences. The nature of the movement demands a high degree of commitment, personal integrity, self-reliance and independent thinking. As such we find majority of radicals are highly educated. They come from urban areas and constitutes what may be called intellectual elite. Being educated, they are economically and professionally well placed. Studies on leadership show (Zald and McCarthy 1987) that contemporary social movement leaders tend to major in social sciences, humanities and arts. These fields of studies are highly relevant to movement leaders as they equip them with appropriate skills required to deal with social issues and problems. In case of RHM it has been observed that a sizeable section of them were engaged in professions like teaching in universities, journalism, legal profession etc. These educational skills enable them to appreciate and understand the philosophical implications underlying 22 theses as propounded by Roy and carve out a role for themselves in concrete existential situations and work towards the creation of a society based on humanistic values. In a tradition bound, stagnant society like India, it is this class of intelligentsia which has undertaken the responsibility of bringing about cultural change which is long overdue. Roy believed, urban bourgeoisie middle class is the only section of Indian society which possesses the requisite level of education and humanistic values to provide leadership to the RHM. This brings us to the actual functioning of RHM.
As the goal of creating a radical humanist society is a continuous process, it is pertinent to point out that in a dynamic changing Indian society the roles that radicals envisage for themselves has also undergone a change. The world has changed radically since the time Roy developed his philosophical ideas. Correspondingly there has been a change in the role envisaged by radicals for themselves. Immediately after the dissolution of RDP in 1948 activities of the radicals in new orientation phase were confined purely to renaissance task. Their primary role was one of propagating their philosophical tenets in a vacuum. They were interacting among themselves and the influence of the leadership was also limited to those who were regular participants in the movement. They were alienated not only from the masses but also from the intellectuals, educationists, scholars, political leaders and social workers of different streams of thought. But gradually they realized their folly and came to believe that they can spread their ideas only in the context of social, economic and political environment in the country. Accordingly we find a dynamic change in the role they have set for themselves and also the status accorded to them by society at large. Recently we find radicals participating in people’s movements for democracy, human rights and civil liberties more particularly since 1975 when internal emergency subverting human freedom and rights was promulgated in the country. In fact it was due to their active role during this period that they caught the attention of other important leaders in the country and public at large. As a result their network of social relationship has also widened and their influence is no longer confined to people involved in the movement. A sizable section of intellectual leaders of the people have been drawn towards secular and democratic ideals due to consistent advocacy of these ideals for decades by radical humanists whose policy has been educate the educators. Today many outstanding scholars, writers, educationists, social and political workers have
publicly expressed their appreciation for ideas and activities of radical humanists. Even though RHM is still a minority movement its influence can be seen not so much at national level as there are very few radicals like V.M. Tarkunde, Gourkishore Ghosh, Sambha Siva Rao etc. who have made their presence felt but at the local level radicals working in different regions are effectively propagating their ideas. They are well known and are respected among academic circles. Their ideas are well received and they are often invited to preside over cultural and literary conferences, to deliver lectures in universities and colleges to participate in radio talks, seminars etc. and to contribute to various new papers and journals both at national and regional levels. Here it is sufficient point out that radicals though small in number have contributed to society and played a positive role in human resource development process. We shall see the specific area and levels of their functioning in next section. In the next section we will discuss the specific areas and functioning levels of radical humanists, their field experiences, the lessons they draw from such experiences and the gaps that exists between their profession and practice.

6.1.5. Fields of Operation

The term 'field' is used here both in terms of spatial spread of the RHM and as well the realm of its activities in socio-economic, educational and political spheres. RHM and its core leadership is spread over a dozen states in India. They work as individual or in small groups in different fields of activity. Data reveals that most of them work as teachers in colleges and universities, as lawyers, writers, and journalists. Some are doctors or engineers by profession and some hold important positions as judges, administrators in reputed institutions. In the absence of many full time workers in the
movements, the radicals try to spread their ideas among people with whom they interact in their specific field of activities in their respective cities and towns. These areas constitute the main field of their active operation. The main functions of the leadership are: to discover and propagate truth; to safeguard and promote human freedom which includes freedom of thought, expression, association and even freedom of heresy; to educate the educators; to help people in helping themselves; to diagnose and analyze the problems of Indian society in particular and to suggest solutions to these problems. True to this conviction and spirit that inspires the radicals, striking feature about the movement is that more than 80% of the radicals this researcher contacted were engaged in renaissance work through their educational and literary activities. Besides their monthly journal, “Radical humanist” radicals published several journals in English, Hindi, Bengali, Telugu and Gujarati. So it is through their writings in newspapers, journals and books they are trying to spread their ideas.

Besides educational work, some radicals were also actively engaged in trade union activities and political work. RHM apart from being a cultural movement can be viewed as a political movement as well because even though not interested in political power and political parties, political realm has always been important to them. Politics, continued to be their field of operation even after dissolution of RDP as is evident from their activities from time to time till date. In 1948, they began an agitation against Bengal Security Bill, which they believed curtailed people’s civil liberties. In the first All India Radical Humanist Convention at Calcutta from 2nd to 5th February Roy delivered an important lecture titled “The foundation of new social philosophy” relating to India’s economic and political problems. Statement on “Draft constitution” and “economic plan” though not the blueprint, nevertheless offers novel approach to deal with political and economic
problems. In the political sphere the prime objective is to strengthen and deepen Indian democracy by ensuring widest diffusion of power. For the purpose it is important firstly to create constructive and powerful public opinion on current political issues and secondly organize people in primary bodies so as to built up participatory democracy radicals as we shall see in subsequent section have been involved in such activities at various levels, some times alone and some times in collaboration with other like minded organizations like CFD, PUCL, rationalist and secularists movements in different parts of the country.

Roy and other radical humanists have always tried to diagnose and analyze the problems of Indian society and culture and have suggested solution to these problems in accordance with their philosophy and perspective. They have been opposed to castism, communilism, religious dogmatism, untouchability and all other forms of social inequalities. Those engaged in educative task have been imparting education, emphasizing values of freedom, rationality and morality through schools, colleges and other organizations they are associated with. Education perhaps constitutes the most important activity that RHM has emphasized since its inception.

6.1.6. Radical Humanist as Educator of the Educators

While discussing the history of RHM we have already seen that in Roy's conception of revolution the task of what he calls educating the educator is central as for him philosophical revolution is a precondition to institutional or social revolution. So the immediate task is not of changing the institutions but one of educating men to change the institutions. Roy was not an educationist by profession but has contributed a great deal in the field of education as a consequence of his life long experience covering his activities
not only in India but many western countries. He believed in the old dictum of Plato that education is the foundation of democracy. Plato discussed the education system from the viewpoint of the character of the people as he realized that the most urgent need of a just and ideal society was the character of its people. The main aim of the education is to build the character of citizens through right type of knowledge. Likewise Roy also argued, "without moral men there can be no moral society. Until now all the architects and engineers of a new society have reversed the order" (Roy 1953:66). So educating man has to be the starting point of any revolution as it is only through education that men become conscience of the crisis gripping the society and herald the revolution. He wrote, 'Revolutions are heralded by iconoclastic ideas conceived by gifted individuals. A brotherhood of men attracted by the adventures of ideas, keenly conscience of the urge for freedom fired with the vision of a free society of free men and motivated by the will to remake the world...will show the way out of the contemporary crisis' (Roy 1954: 253).

For Roy, quality of the human material is the measure of the stability and success of any institution and structure. Therefore it is important to lay the social foundation (education) before undertaking the task of raising the superstructure. By education Roy did not mean merely literacy but an integral education, which helps in the development of human personality, conscious of its creative potentialities, rights and responsibilities. The purpose of education for administrators, policy makers and even the majority of the educators themselves is largely to impart knowledge and skills to students so that they equip themselves for certain jobs and are gainfully employed.

It is true that education fails in its important social function if it can not make individuals useful members of the society by enabling them to contribute in the economic development of the society, but the idea of making men merely useful for the society is
not an end in itself to the humanist way of thinking. Even the most pragmatist thinker on education, John Dewey, observed that real education should provide young with some sort of intellectual and moral key to contemporary world. Commenting on the state of education in America he wrote:

The primary need of every person at present is capacity to think; the power to see problems to relate facts to them, to use and enjoy ideas. If a young man or woman comes from school with this power, all other things may be in time added to him. He will find himself intellectually and morally. But in the mass of things that have to be learned the ability of the individuals to think is submerged. In consequence, too large a part of our citizens has left our schools without power of critical discrimination, at the mercy of special propaganda, and drifting from one plan and scheme to another, according to the loudest clamor of the moment (As quoted in Radical Humanist, 16 September 1956, p.435).

The state of education in India is much worse today because the kind of education that we are imparting today is both superficial and inadequate. In a developing country like India, rapid expansion of education makes it difficult to get teachers, let alone the teachers of a right kind. As the teaching profession deserves the credit of being the architect of the nation, it is important that the people constituting this important category are socially aware, self confident, capable of providing the intellectual leadership to the society both in the field of thought and actions. They are expected to play a dynamic role in the process of social change. No doubt in a developing country like ours, socialization of the individual and transmission of skills and knowledge appropriate for gainful employment still remains an important task of our education system, but this aspect with emphasis on stability, continuity and social control reflects only the static aspect of what is desirable in reality. In a rapidly changing reality, care has to be taken to introduce an element of dynamism. It is obligatory on the part of the teacher to promote in his students the spirit of critical enquiry and creating in them a capacity to discern between desirable
and undesirable, good and bad. Educated elite are supposed to think ahead of times and are expected to act as catalytic agents of social change. Historically, educated elite in India has played such a dynamic role particularly with reference to our nationalist movement, struggle for independence and various reform movements that have emerged from time to time. One can speak of certain universal modern attributes, which should become an integral part of educated elite if our education has to serve a useful purpose. These are: inculcation of rationality and scientific spirit so that our past traditions, value systems and ethos are constantly subjected to re-examination or modification in the light of the knowledge made available by modern science; acceptance of values of equality and social justice, freedom from structural constraints such as particularistic loyalties such as regionalism, casteism, nepotism, linguism etc. But in reality at empirical level we find that educated elite in our country itself has not internalised these values. Educators themselves have to be freed from such constraints by waging a continuous struggle against them in their day to day activities. In other words educators themselves need to be educated if we want to have really educated people. Methodology or strategy of RHIM is based on the firm faith that man can change the present social system and create a better system but somehow man has lost faith in his own power to do so. This has resulted in social stagnation and cultural crisis. In Indian situation most of the so-called teachers or educators have grown up in an atmosphere where destiny of man is believed to be in the hands of some supernatural power. To make them realize that human beings endowed with the potentiality of developing the highest human abilities and talents are capable of shaping their own destinies is not an easy task. Therefore first and foremost task is to make men conscious of their own power, which is possible only through an educational movement. As it is impossible to educate millions and millions of the backward masses,
radicals felt best thing would be to educate some thousands of them i.e. educate the educators first. They alone can provide the subjective factor of revolution as under the objective Indian conditions where mass of people still have medieval 16th or 17th century it is only the urban middle class which possesses the requisite potential to provide leadership. The education of this nature cannot be expected to be imparted through official educational institutions or on the conventional patterns of the educational system. Private institutions, NGOs or individuals engaged in diverse activities can supplement official educational channels and as we shall see in the forthcoming section, it is here that RHM has played a functional role at various levels.

6.2. **Functioning Levels and Field Experiences of Radical Humanists**

On the basis of the empirical field work carried out by way of being a participant observer in number of study camps; carrying out detailed interviews and discussions with more than two dozen important leaders and gathering information from the rest through a detailed questionnaire constructed for the purpose, the researcher is in a position to discuss actual functioning of RHM at concrete level and comment on the viability, limitations and future prospects of the movement.

The empirical study of RHM reveals that radical humanists who are spread over a dozen states in our country function at different levels: all India, regional and local. As has been pointed out earlier, RHM does not have any centralized organization and is characterized by the absence of any regular membership or hierarchy of selected executive bodies. Its members are held together not by any organizational discipline but by their common outlook, commitment and the influence radiated by the philosophy of Radical Humanism. Groups of radical humanists are to be found in every big city. These
groups are more active in some areas than others. States representing some important functional groups are Calcutta (West-Bengal); Bombay, Poona, Nagpur, Aurangabad (Maharashtra); Patna (Bihar); Delhi; Meerut, Dehradun (Uttar-Pradesh); Jaipur, Jodhpur (Rajasthan); Hyderabad, Guntur (Andhra-Pradesh).5

These groups of radicals have made significant impact in their respective field of activities. They have not only contributed to the growth and spread of seminal ideas pertaining to democratic values, morality and reason but also participated particularly in post associational phase, in people's movements in furtherance of rationalism, civil liberties and democratization. The data amply substantiates the fact that educating the educator still remains their primary activity. More than 80% of the respondents that the researcher contacted are engaged in educational and literary activities. Holding study camps and conferences constitutes an important activity for radicals. They meet frequently at local or regional level to discuss various problems and plan together various programmes of activities. They also meet every year in national reunions and are kept informed about the activities of various groups through their main organs RH, IRHA. At the national level, various institutions, which ensure regular collaboration and exchange among individuals and groups, are IRI, RP, RH, IRHA and Humanist Youth Forum. We have already seen in detail the role performed by these organs in spreading the movement. Here I propose to analyze the functioning of the movement with reference to the activities

5 Some important leading figures from these States: R.M. Tarkunde, R.L. Nigam, Sunil Bhattacharya, R.M. Patil, Gauri Bazaz, N.D. Pancholi and Rawat (Delhi) Sibnarayan Ray, Gaur Kishore Ghosh, Anath Mitra, Shantibala Sen, Sitangshu Chatterjee, Monidas Gupta (West-Bengal); Laxmashastri Joshi, A.B. Shah, V.B. Karnik, M.A. Rane, G.D. Parikh, Indumati Parikh, Maniben Kar (Maharashtra); C.T. Daru, Jayanti Patel (Gujarat); Manbot (Jaipur); M.L. Sen (Patna); Sambasiva Rao, M.V. Ramamurthy, Malladi Subbamma, Janaiah (AP); Balraj Puri, Prem Nath Bazaz (Jammu & Kashmir); S.N. Puri, Birendra Pande, Nautiyal (Dehradun), R.S. Yadava (Meerut).
carried out both by individuals and groups and their impact on the overall growth of the movement.

12.1. Relationship of Radical Humanists with Other Groups and Associations

The Radical Humanists have not only contributed to the growth and spread of seminal ideas in respect of man’s reason and morality and radical democracy in their individual capacities at theoretical level but, from time to time they have also participated in people’s movements in furtherance of rationalism, civil liberties and democracy. Since late 1970s radicals realized the limitations of restricting their movement to renaissance work, that is, one of spreading their philosophical ideas in vacuum through organizing educational activities alone. In partial modification of their earlier stand, they have realized that the philosophy and practice of humanism must be mainly concerned with the problems, which are of primary importance to human beings specifically the underprivileged. As clearly stated in the revised constitution of IRHA, one of the main objectives of the association is, ‘to work for deprived people at the grass root level and try to bring them to the level of dignified human level of existence’. Another important departure from the past has been the realization of the necessity of working in collaboration with like-minded national and international organizations and individuals. Various institutional structures and organizations where radicals have played a significant role are explored in the sections below.

Among the various non-government organizations and groups the radical humanists have been working in collaboration with, the earliest are Citizens for Democracy (CFD) and Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). These were set up in 1970s to safeguard our freedom and rights at different levels, which were threatened by the state under Indira Gandhi’s regime in 1975 when national emergency was declared. In these organizations radicals worked in close association with individuals and groups who were influenced by Jai Prakash Narayan and Gandhian philosophy and movement. So before discussing the activities of CFD and PUCL, it is essential to bring out the relationship between Roy’s radical humanism and Gandhi’s Sarvodaya philosophy at a theoretical level which seem to have some common elements but very different philosophical outlooks.
6.2.2. Sarvodaya Movement

If one compares Roy’s Radical Humanism with Gandhi’s Sarvodaya philosophy one finds that the two emanate from two different, in fact rival philosophical approaches towards life. Roy was a materialist whereas Gandhi was a spiritualist emphasizing the ascetic way of life. Roy in his Marxist phase was a bitter critic of Gandhism. He wrote, “Gandhism is diseased at the core. It is a product of a pathological mentality of guilt, fear, obsession, self hatred” (Roy 1946: 28). He regarded it to be the main obstacle to political and economic modernization of Indian Society. At the philosophical plane one finds Gandhism and New Humanism as diametrically opposed to each other and yet strangely enough “two movements have reached a remarkable similarity in certain socio-political areas”. Here we intend to trace the relationship between RHM and sarvodaya movement by analyzing the points of similarities and differences between the ideas represented by two systems of thought and their implications for the nature of their respective movements.

Both Gandhi and Roy, the two great philosophers of twentieth century have deeply studied and analyzed the socio-economic and political crisis mankind is faced with and on the basis of their experiences and observations have suggested a way out. Gandhi no doubt has been a very prominent and popular figure on the Indian scene. In fact it is claimed, “Gandhism has played a decisive role in the life of Indian nation for more than the last four or five decades. It has so singally dominated and shaped it

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particularly in the ideological and political domains, that we can describe that period as the epoch of Gandhism.

Roy for several reasons could be regarded as a political failure and was rather a controversial and unpopular figure. Yet, as a philosopher his analysis of socio-economic problems of the country was much more original, unconventional and scientific and therefore New humanism as propounded by him has a special relevance in the contemporary era in that it calls for a unique approach towards socio-political problems confronting the mankind. As we have seen earlier also while discussing the evolution of Roy’s ideas, Roy during his Marxian phase was the greatest critique of Gandhian Philosophy. Even while he was away he and his wife Evelyn under the pen name of ‘Shanti Devi’ made most trenchant criticisms of Gandhian ideology from abroad. Even when he came back to India and joined Indian national congress he bitterly criticized Gandhian reactionary leadership and called for a more progressive, radical, alternative leadership. But towards the end of his life, in the light of his long experience when he came out with his new philosophy New Humanism we find, ‘he not only made significant departures from Marxism but also incorporated into his philosophy certain values which appear to be characteristically Gandhian e.g., Truth, morality, decentralisation of power, party less democracy etc.’

But despite certain similarities between the two philosophies (which in fact is more apparent than real) it would be erroneous to equate New Humanism with Gandhism. Gandhi was a spiritualist, believer and he reduced individual to a non-entity in so far as he regarded man to be an instrument, messenger of God - God being beyond the understanding and comprehension of man. He wrote, "if we exist, if our parents and their
parents existed, then it is proper to believe in the parent of the whole creation --- God is, was and shall be." and "I am one of the millions of wise men who believe in Him and am never tired of bowing to Him and Singing his glory". Further, "God has chosen me as His instrument for presenting non-violence to India". Thus we see "A Gandhite is mentally so conditioned that he is always prepared to bow before the "inscrutable" commands of God. His movements are those of a helpless creature to be toyed by a mysterious force --- (Gandhism) assumes that man as man can not be moral, and he must be spiritually subservient to some extraneous super human power." In contrast Roy was an atheist, opposed to the idea of God and regarded man as a self sufficient being, an end in himself. He wrote, "when I realized that God presented the obstacle in the path of human freedom I rejected God and since then I have thought against those who claim to derive their authority from God".

Gandhi traces morality from religion and for him moral laws are made by God and no one has a right to infringe them and for him 'Truth' is something metaphysical and mystic, as he believed "God is truth". Roy on the other hand traces morality in the biological nature of man, the sanction for truth and morality being derived from his innate rational nature. Thus new humanism in contrast to Gandhism has no mystic element and it has its basis in modern science, truth being the content of knowledge and not any mystical force. Gandhism takes as ascetic view of life, advocating self abnegating moral approach, crucification of flesh, abstinence etc. for the attainment of 'moksha' (some super sensual happiness) In contrast New Humanism takes a hedonist and

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7 See G.G.Shah, Marxism, Gandhism and Stalinism, p290.
A secular view of life favoring the unfoldment of human desires and with the help of reason it seeks to remove progressively all the restraints on the unfoldment of human life and achieve a higher standard of life. Gandhi's ideal was 'simple living and high thinking'. Roy however never saw any contradiction between high living and high thinking and therefore always welcomed industrial progress and scientific achievements of modern era. Which to Gandhi was a sin. Gandhi being a believer having faith in rebirth, incarnation, salvation etc. had otherworldly attitude whereas Roy rejected all these elements as mere superstitions -- great hurdles in the progress of mankind. Radicals strongly felt, "Gandhism is one of those anti-intellectual movements which are at the root of the disease of which new Humanism is a panacea." 12

Thus we see Gandhism and Radical Humanism are poles apart and if we see the history of RHM we find radicals being staunch critiques of Gandhism did never see anything in common with followers of Gandhi and therefore till 1970's we never see radical humanists working in cooperation with people involved in Sarvodaya movement whom they always found unintelligent, backward and reactionary. Here it is important to point out that one cannot completely equate Gandhi with Sarvodaya or for that matter Roy with Radical Humanism. From time to time, in the light of the new experiences certain new elements have been incorporated in both Philosophical systems of thought by their respective followers. There have been important post Gandhian developments on certain aspects of socio-political life. The developments in Sarvodaya philosophy after Gandhi were brought firstly by Vinoba Bhave and then by Jaya Prakash Narayan. The latter in particular developed Sarvodaya ideas on concepts of partyless democracy, grassroot democracy and rural-economic development on the lines advocated by radical

12 Letter to S.N. Ray, vide Radical Humanist.
humanists. In his tract swaraj for the people JP has acknowledged the influence of M.N.Roy on the evolution of his thought in this respect. Pointing out the remarkable similarity between the two Tarkunde writes:

His (J.P's) article on "Participating Democracy" (published in his book communitarian society and panchayati Raj) --- could have been written by a competent radical humanist. It appears to me therefore that, unconsciously rather than consciously, Jay Prakash Narayan Stands somewhere mid way between Gandhi and Roy. This is probably the reason why Sarvodaya workers and Radical Humanists have found it so very easy to work in cooperation for the defense of democratic values and institutions (See V.M.Tarkunde, Radical Humanist, September 1976, p.14)

The common ground between the two is provided by the fact that protagonists of both the schools of thought working in their respective spheres have experienced the evils of party politics and have therefore came to advocate partyless democracy. Both cherish the ideal of freedom and believe that democracy is the best form of government, which must be defended at all costs. Roy however felt that the system of parliamentary democracy existing in India as "only a veiled dictatorship"(Roy 1960:188). He was pessimistic about the quality of both the leaders and people in India. He wrote, "assuming most democratic intentions on the part of national leaders, the entire trend of our national politics is leading towards dictatorship"(Roy 1960: 203). In view of the "admitted failure of parliamentary practice throughout the world" it could not have a chance in India where "failure of democracy itself will be predetermined by objective conditions and the mentality of the people which cannot conceive of human freedom and human creativity" (Roy 1960: 191). This distrust of parliamentary democracy was shared by the intellectuals of the country including JP, while appreciating what was good in

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Parliamentary democracy as against dictatorship, both JP and Gandhi were critical of its defects e.g. its formalism, its atomization of the individual, growing preponderance of the executive, and bureaucracy etc. One important difference that exists between RHM and Sarvodaya movement has been that the former has been confined merely to educated, intellectual strata of society, who have confined their activities to intellectual propaganda of their philosophy through their writings, discussions and study camps etc. The Sarvodayists by contrast have always heavily relied upon involving the people directly in their programmes for bringing about social reforms and social transformation and thus building up the movement as a mass movement. There exists a genuine danger of authoritarianism developing in any movement, which stresses quantity over quality. Pointing out this danger Sibrayay argues, "a mass movement without the individual's composing it having undergone a philosophical revolution is bound to develop in the mass irrational and abject reliance on their leader. This is what happened in the case of Gandhi and is likely to happen in the case of Bhooman movement. Acharya has already been made a Mahatma and Mr. Narayan himself may become one, unless he takes heed in time". RHM because of its stress on quality, individual initiative and spirit of criticism perhaps has fewer spiritual risks and in the end may prove more fruitful. But at the same time its major limitation is that the kind of philosophical resolution it calls for is too slow a process of social change. JP while attending the IRI study camp in May 1956 pointed out that in country like India which is faced with enormous and pressing problems, a slow process of change faces the danger of being overcome by the pressure of these problems. In such situations, others are more likely to take advantage of wide discontent and exploit it for harmful ends. Cooperation between radical and Sarvodaya
workers thus might be very fruitful in meeting this danger. This cooperation has become a reality since early 1970s. When JP saw that Indira's regime gradually drifting towards establishment of dictatorial regime he successfully carried his distrust of the system to the people and launched the movement to stabilize and safeguard democracy. JP movement which spread throughout the country did pay dividends (despite the fact that it was crushed by mighty state power) in the sense that discussion on assault on democracy no longer remained just an intellectual exercise, it made people more and more conscious of the inadequacies of the existing system of parliamentary representation, made them more actively resentful of corruption in public affairs etc. RHM, which had more or less remained in a moribund condition, found for itself an opportunity and a climate in which it could grow and therefore a meeting of the central Executive Committee (CEC) of the RHA was held in Bombay on 19 October 1974 primarily to discuss the question of defining their attitude towards Bihar movement and other similar movements that came to be launched in different parts of the country. After depth discussions CEC of RHA resolved to generally support the movement as they viewed such movements provide an opportunity for organizing and educating the people in values of democracy, which they hold, is the only guarantee against dictatorship. A number of radicals came out in open to support the JP movement and they were prepared to work actively, in cooperation with individuals and organizations cherishing democratic values, for preserving and strengthening democracy in the country. Realizing the importance of establishing a direct rapport with the people in country like India, many a radicals in conjunction with Sarvodaya workers, tried to spread the message of radical humanism by directly going to the people.

\[14\] A Report of Indian Renaissance Institute study camp at Mussoorie, 16-26, May 1956.
Such activities on the part of radicals and their association with JP proved instrumental in reviving the RHM. Radical humanists could work in association with Sarvodaya leaders primarily because of some apparent similarities between their conceptions of partyless democracy, grass root democracy and importance attached to role of morality in both personal and public life. Cooperation between Sarvodaya and radical humanists is a strange development as the two are guided by two rival philosophical outlooks as represented by Gandhism and Radical humanism. "Curiously, however, Radicals who used to call Gandhi a prophet of backwardness, now feel more at home with those who have caricatured and fetished the great man", writes Balraj Puri an eminent radical humanist. In order to analyze the above interesting development it would be important to briefly refer to the main similarities between radical humanism and Sarvodaya philosophy.

Both Roy's ideal of organized democracy and political organization as proposed by Gandhi are highly critical of parliamentary democracy. Modern democracies as they existed were seen by them as 'veiled dictatorship' or 'diluted nazism' respectively as the power in such a system ultimately resides not with the people but with their elected representatives (cabinet) who rather than representing the will of the people impose their power on them. Both Gandhi and Roy held that the greatest cause of malfunctioning of democracy was centralization of power and therefore both advocated decentralization of power to the extent that state and society would become coterminous and the real power would reside with people - in hands of village panchayats of Gandhian conception and people's committees as envisaged by Roy.

15 See Balraj Puri's article in Radical Humanist, 6 November 1966, p.514.
Both Gandhi and Roy were for renunciation of power politics and eradication of political parties in a democratic set up. Radical humanists and Sarvodayists are the only two exceptions in our country that gave practical guidelines indicating how partyless democracy can be possible in a modern nation-state. In the post independence period we find Roy in consensus with other radicals dissolved RDP in 1948 as he came to believe that political party by its very nature was involved in the dirty scramble for power and humanism needs no political power to triumph. Gandhi had also suggested the dissolution of congress party and wanted congressmen to serve the humanity without indulging in party politics. And following Gandhi, JP after taking a pledge for Jeeyavan appealed to all "sensitive and less self-centered legislators, parliamentarians and administrators to leave their jobs and go to the people."¹⁶ "Go to the lok and not to Lok Sabha".¹⁷

Both Gandhi & Roy believed that loss of morality in man has been another factor responsible for failure of democracy. Both agree that no system, however good and ideal, can be more democratic as long as men remain as they are. Thus to change the society, change the man was advocated by both Roysits and Gandhites. For the success of democracy it is necessary that the individual be reoriented by restoring the values of morality and rationality in human nature. "For man really to enjoy liberty and freedom and to practice self government, it is necessary voluntarily to limit his wants" write Sarvodaya leader JP.¹⁸ Roy also believed that "if human nature cannot change, freedom would always be abused. All attempts for creating any new social order of freedom would also have to be abandoned"(Roy 1960:142). To change the man Gandhi's appeal is

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¹⁷ See J.P.'s article, Hindustani Times, 23 August 1966, p 5.
¹⁸ See Jai Prakash Narayan, A Plea for for Reconstruction of Indian Polity, p. 4.
to emotions while Roy relies heavily on reason and spread of humanist values. Perhaps Gandhi's greatest contribution to humanity has been his emphasis on peaceful and nonviolent mode of struggle to bring about social transformation. Following Gandhi Roy during humanist phase also come to believe that ends do not justify the means. To reach the right ends, the means also must be Good. Both had profound faith in peaceful and nonviolent means to bring about revolutions in history. Basic problem for Royists and Gandhites appears to be the same - one of restoring faith of man in himself and rehabilitation of moral values, which are fast disappearing. But for the purpose Gandhi emphasizes the role of religion and calls for revival of old traditions - going back to Ram Rajya, whereas Roy has tremendous faith in achievements of modern science and advocates diffusion of renaissance values (freedom, rationality and morality). For humanist Roy, reason alone can enable man to shape a better future for himself. "Humanism excludes supernaturalism and affirms that man with his increasing power over nature is the maker of his future".  

Disagreeing with above statement as outlined in draft declaration of aims and objects of the RHA, JP in his inaugural speech of all India Conference of R.H.A. held in Calcutta in December 1973, Said, "Whatever the nature of the human spirit may be, it definitely seems to be of a higher order than the Mind." He expressed that reason alone will not enable man to shape a better future for himself.

Thus we see for reorienting human nature sarvodayists take refuge in religion and glorification of past traditions, radicals count on rationality and progress made by modern science. Reoriented man of Gandhi's ideal is a religious ascetic individual in search of truth, which demands intensely moral life, which in turn requires crucification of our flesh and limiting our wants to a basic minimum. On the other hand on ideal man of
humanist conception is a modern man with a humanist outlook, cherishing the values of freedom, rationality and morality - an individual also in search of truth - truth being the content of knowledge, which is constantly expanding as a consequence of growth and developments of modern science.

In radical humanist philosophy society has no interest over and above the interests of various individuals composing the society as individual is the end and society the means. In contrast Sarvodayists place community at the centre and there is a presumption that good of the individuals can be best obtained by subordinating their interests to the higher interests of the community. Thus we see Gandhism and Radical Humanism constitute two rival outlooks of life and yet both have been able to work in cooperation with each other especially since the dark days of emergency as both stand for partyless democracy and both are actively engaged in the process of experimenting with their ideal of grass-root democracy. Jointly they are trying to organize people in the villages in primary democracies by helping them form people’s committees an idea developed by Roy as early as in 1936 and later on popularized by JP. V.M. Tarkunde’s close association with JP also resulted in coming together of radical humanists and Sarvodaya followers and their joint participation in formation of a non party organizations like ‘citizens for democracy’ (CFD) and people’s union for civil liberties (PULL).

6.2.3. Citizens for Democracy

M.N. Roy had always been apprehensive about future of Indian democracy. He strongly believed that we couldn’t have a stable democratic political regime in a basically authoritarian Indian culture. Distrustful as he was of both the ruling and opposition parties, as they were engaged in unscrupulous and unprincipled power politics he called

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"See Radical Humanist, September 1976, p.19."
On attaining national independence, India became a one party state. That fact naturally caused apprehension about the future of democracy in this country —- the organization of an opposition party with the object of snatching power from the party in office does not guarantee democracy —- instead of organizing constitutional opposition parties, or insurrectionary parties, to seize power, and be corrupted eventually as their predecessors (that is inevitable if it is true that power corrupts), champions of democratic freedom should endeavor to enable the people to come to power. If sovereignty belongs to the people and it is inalienable, then they should not be asked to abdicate it by voting for this party or that party which would wield political power on the authority of the powerless sovereign. To blast the road to democratic freedom it is necessary to quicken the political consciousness of the people —-. But that way, indeed the only way to the establishment of a democracy which will be able to defend itself, naturally does not find favor with politicians who can not think except in terms of capturing power, and who deceive themselves as well as others by saying that they will make a good use of power which corrupts their opponents (See Independent India, XII-15, 1948, p.177).

The task of achieving a really democratic society can only be accomplished by moral, selfless individuals and organizations working for the welfare of the people without being power seekers. RHM and Sarvodaya movements were two such movements launched for the purpose on Indian scene. If one reviews the political situation in India one finds that an authoritarian regime was not established immediately after independence as was feared by some radicals. This was because of the peculiar personality of Pandit Nehru who was a great upholder of individual freedom and cherished democratic values. Soon after his death an all pervading crisis in Indian Society, economic, political and moral - paved way to the establishment of dictatorial
regime and weakness of Indian democracy was amply demonstrated by imposition of
internal emergency in June 75. JP believed that statement on Indian scene arising from
failure of ruling as well as opposition parties could be ended by some appropriate action
by people themselves. And for the purpose he decided to guide the student's movement
that had first sprung up in Gujrat and later spread to Bihar and other parts of the Country.
He had tremendous faith in youth of the country. Radicals supported the movement as
they regarded it to be a genuinely democratic movement directed against corrupt
ministers and those using corrupt means to win elections, and more so as it was led by a
leader of J.P's stature whose reputation as a self-less, dedicated sarvodaya worker had
never been in doubt. Supporting the movement Tarkunde wrote, "the sudden upsurge in
the popularity of Jaya prakash Narayan should be attributed to the fact that he has become
the Symbol of what hope we have of saving freedom and democracy in the country".21
JP, like Roy could anticipate the danger of suppression of human liberties and abrogation
of democratic institutions by the then Prime-minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and in
anticipation of the possibility of such a development, he along with other democratic
elements including radical humanists set up an organization for defense of democracy in
1974 called citizens for democracy (Jantantra - Samaj) A successful inaugural
Conference of CFD was held at Gandhi Peace Foundation auditorium on April 13-14,
1974. This Conference was well attended by many Sarvodaya followers, important
political leaders, journalists, lawyers and radical humanists. JP was elected as its
president and Tarkunde its General secretary. CFD was a broad based movement striving
to bring together all those cherishing democratic values and who were prepared to work
actively for preserving, defending and strengthening democracy in the country. It was a
political organization without being a political party; nor was it a supporter or opponent of any political party. It attracted a large number of intellectuals in the country who, disgusted with the functioning of political parties, were in search of some alternative which could provide them the platform to propagate their rational and constructive ideas so that they could initiate a movement directed against corruption, authoritarianism etc. Radical humanists who had remained were or less alienated from the socio-politic and economic problems for a long time found for themselves a fertile ground to work actively and spread their humanist ideas. They could work as part of CFD without making any fundamental compromise with their philosophy primarily because of the basic similarity between the aims and objectives of CFD and that of RHA. The primary objective of the CFD as enunciated in its constitution was to bring together democratic minded people in the country in order to guide public opinion by propagating rational and constructive view so as to counteract demagogic and sectarian appeals. With this end in view it will take ceaseless action:

(a) To develop a public movement of active intolerance of all forms of corruption in public affairs.
(b) To educate the people in the principles of democracy and to develop a discriminating and independent public opinion on all public issues by undertaking an examination of these issues from a democratic and rational point of view unaffected by sectional and partisan considerations, and by propagating the conclusions.
(c) To secure recognition to the right of public dissent and generally to defend civil liberties.
(d) To ensure independence of the press and other mass media like radio and television.
(e) To ensure independence of the judiciary.
(f) To bring about electoral reform and in particular to prevent elections from being contested on the strength of huge financial resources collected mostly in the form of black-money.
(g) To secure popular recognition of the democratic principle of the dignity of the individual and on that basis to combat untouchability, casteism and

21 See RH, November 1974, p.3.
communalism and secure an increasing measure of social as well as economic equality.
(h) To bring about necessary improvements on the present parliamentary institutions so as to make them respond to the will of the people.
(i) To foster moral values in different sections of society, with particular emphasis on the younger generation.
(j) To develop appropriate local organizations so as to increase people's participation in the affairs of the state; and
(k) Generally to achieve stabilization and strengthening of democracy without being involved in power politics.\textsuperscript{22}

Above mentioned activities proposed by CFD were in no way contradictory to
radical humanist way of thinking and therefore a meeting of the Executive Council of
RHA was held on 12 April, 1974 in New Delhi primarily to discuss the relationship
between RHA and the proposed CFD. There was general consensus among radicals to
take active part in the activities of the proposed organization. This they thought would
provide them with an opportunity to spread their ideas among youth who had revolted
against corrupt and self-seeking politicians in power. In such a climate RHA called upon
its members to intensify their work among youth by placing before them the ideals and
values of new humanism for consideration and by helping them to mould their future
social and political activities on the humanistic principles. Henceforth radicals decided to
function as part of CFD - a broad based organization with wider appeal. As result of their
active participation in the activities of CFD a number of radicals came to be widely
known in intellectual circles which provided them an opportunity to spread their ideas
and influence the educated circles though not necessarily in the name of RHM. This is
not to suggest the total merger of RHM with CFD. It continued to have an identity of its
own because despite having similarities with Sarvodaya regarding decentralization of
power and love for democracy at political level, it differs qualitatively in some important
respects. One important difference being the humanists' emphasis on cultural & philosophical revolution being a necessary precondition for successful democratic revolution. The nature of this philosophical revolution however has not been much appreciated by J.P.'s followers and various organizations setup by him, like CFD.

Radicals worked in cooperation with CFD in so far as they did not have to make any compromise with their philosophy. And more over they found some basic similarities in some of the ideas developed by JP and those of Roy, e.g. the concept of panchayati Raj as developed by JP is indistinguishable from Roy's concept of organized democracy depicted in his Draft constitution of India and other writings. Both visualize local democracies not only in villages but also in cities and towns, and also organic link between these local democracies and the governments at state and central level. Both advocate party less politics and decentralization and diffusion of power amongst people.

We find, a number of branches of CFD were set up in different parts of a country with a purpose to spread democratic movement and enlightenment among the general public. A number of radicals toured different parts of the country establishing direct support with the people, explaining them in an idiom they could easily grasp and understand the necessity of forming an organization like CFD, its aims and objectives. An attempt was made to involve locally important people in the functioning of local branches of CFD by organizing a number of formal and informal meetings. These meetings invoked good response from people who were gradually drawn into the movement for preserving democracy and fight authoritarian forces represented by ruling congress symbolised by Indira Gandhi. In a matter of a couple of years of its formation CFD, a non party political organisation became an all India phenomenon and for the first

time after independence, the democratic minded intellectuals who had more or less remained arm chared intellectuals came out of their ivory towers to work unitedly and actively for a democratic movement in the country during black days of emergency. CFD "conducted a fearless and sustained campaign for the defense of civil liberties and democratic rights through out the period of emergency, with the result that members of that organization, including a number of radical humanists became well known in India as determined fighters for freedom and democracy." 23

During emergency many a radicals, like Tarkunde (Delhi), C.T. Daru (Ahmedabad) A.B. Shah (Bombay), Gour kishore Ghosh (Calcutta) M.V.Ramamurthy (South) etc. were involved in producing and circulating literature in the form of pamphlets carrying significant news from different parts of the country which remained unknown due to press censorship. As public meetings were prohibited, members of CFD organized a large number of small group meetings in private houses to discuss important issues from time to time. As a result of their anti-government activities threatening the rule of congress regime, a number of CFD members including some radical humanists were put in jail. Among those arrested important radicals were Mr. Ramamurthy - a member of CEC of RHA, Mrs. Gour Kishore Ghosh, a celebrated Bengali writer and a popular radical humanist in Bengal, Mr. C.T.Daru, the then general secretary of RHA, Mr. Shanti Sen, president of West Bengal branch of RHA, Mr. Prasannadas D.Patwari, a leading radical humanist from Gujrat. But for some strange and mysterious reason Mr. V.M.Tarkunde was not arrested, despite the fact that he openly carried out the crusade against emergency by organising and addressing public meetings all over Indian and criticized the authoritarian regime of Indira Gandhi most bitterly. Thus we see in the post
associational phase because of the peculiar conditions of our country during emergency and also because of Tarkunde's association with JP and CFD, RHMs gained momentum and a serious effort was made by its members to revive the movement by actively participating in its activities which were political in nature.

6.3. Rationalist and Secularist Streams of Thinking and Activities

Rationalism is basically a mental attitude, which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience and independent of all arbitrary assumptions or authority. Accepting such rationalism as its starting point, humanism further accepts the results of the application of reason to life's problems and therefore represents a positive philosophy and programme of action aiming to solve human problems in every sphere of life. Whereas international rationalist movement has given fundamental importance to battle against religion, RHMs emphasis has been on renaissance encompassing all spheres of human activity. In this sense humanist movement is much wider in scope than rationalist movement. However, a close relationship exists between rationalist and RHM because rationalism is one of the core elements of radical humanist philosophy as propounded by Roy. Radicals have contributed a great deal in rationalist movement. M.N.Roy, Ellen Roy, Avula Gopalakrishnamurthy, V.B.Karnik, R.S.Yadava, Tarkateertha Lakshmansastry Joshi, A.B.Shah, M.V.Ramamurthy, Innaiah, Monidas Gupta have been actively associated with the Rationalist Movement in India. Here, two important bodies that have been constituted and through which radicals haven been propagating their secular and rationalist ideology are, Indian Secular Society; and Rationalist Association of India.
International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU)

IHEU, founded in 1952 in Amsterdam is a world umbrella organization for humanists, rationalists, secularists and free thought groups. Its member organizations range from large membership groups to specialist bodies such as publishers, universities and development agencies. M.N.Roy was closely involved in the establishment of IHEU. As we have seen Roy having dissolved the Radical Democratic Party, devoted himself totally to the renaissance work and the radical humanist movement that was initiated as an instrument to accomplish this task, joined hands with similar groups in Europe and America to establish IHEU. So RHM is one of the founder members of IHEU, and Roy was to attend the ceremony at Amsterdam in 1952, but could not do so due to an accident. He was elected a founder vice-president in absentia. As a federation of national and regional humanist groups, IHEU co-ordinates activities of its member organizations, stimulates their policies and guides their strategies. Various organs of RHM like Indian radical humanist association and Indian renaissance institute have worked in collaboration with IHEU on number of occasions and have conducted several work shops, seminars and conferences with a view to promote humanistic, secular and rational culture. At individual level also a number of radicals besides Roy, like Tarkunde, Sibnarayan Ray, Indumati Parikh, Innaiah Nasiretti, Babu Gogineni have found appreciation for their activities by IHEU. Babu Gogineni was the Executive Director of the IHEU and editor of the International Humanist News. It is a forum where humanist organizations and individuals can exchange thoughts and expertise for improving the sordid conditions that grip different societies as a consequence of national and international activities. In 1998, the headquarters of IHEU was shifted to London. Apart from its international headquarters in London, IHEU runs regional secretariats for Latin America (Costa Rica),
South Asia (India), and specialist secretariats and networks like the Secretariat for humanist professionals, for social work, for the media (Netherlands), the secretariat for Growth and Development (USA) and the Bio-Ethics network (Belgium).

6.3.2 Indian Secular Society (ISS)

This society was established in 1968. The founder president of this society, Mr. A.B. Shah has been an active radical humanist. He has also been the editor of ‘New Quest’ and ‘The Secularist’ published by Indian Rationalist association. In its formative years the ISS under the leadership of A.B. Shah and Hameed Dalwai initiated several programmes which laid its foundation. ISS seeks to promote humanist ideas and values and believes that the most serious threat to the development of India as a secular democratic state guaranteeing individual freedom and social justice, comes from religious obscurantism. The activities of the ISS include the holding of meetings, seminars, conferences and conducting research projects and educational and cultural activities. ISS publishes a bi-monthly journal called The Secularist, which is now in the 18th year of publication. Its current editor is V.K. Sinha who is also an important actor of the RHM.

The ISS is a member organization of IHEU since 1972.

6.3.3. Rationalist Association of India

The Rationalist Association of India (RAI) was first formed in Bombay in 1930. It became inactive during the Second World War but was rejuvenated as Indian Rationalist Association (IRA) in 1949 at Madras. Many prominent intellectuals from all over India

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24 The ISS was established as a non-political voluntary organization and is registered under both the Societies Registration Act 1860 and the Bombay Public Trusts Act (1950). The ISS is a national organization and has members from all over India and abroad. It is supported by membership fee and voluntary donations. Its managing committee comprises 11 members, including a President and two Vice-Presidents, Secretary and a Treasurer.

25 IRA functioned until 1996 but to avoid factional tendencies and legal complications the National Congress of IRA held at Hyderabad on 7 April 1996 resolved to change its name and adopted the original name of RAI.
participated in its revival and over the years several seminars and conferences were organized under the banner of IRA. In the recent years from 1997 Babu Gogineni, an active radical humanist from Andhra Pradesh became the General Secretary of RAI. It has a network of organizations all over India and it maintains contacts with rationalist groups and individuals where organizational setup is lacking. Among its objectives, the most important is 'to promote the spread of rationalism and humanism'; and 'to adopt rationalism as a methodology which applies reason to modern scientific and other disciplines of knowledge to arrive at the life stance of humanism'. It has the status as voting member of the IHEU. It has been observed that the Andhra Pradesh (AP) wing of RAI has been the most active center of the whole organization. The AP chapter of RAI runs a regular monthly Telugu magazine called Hetuvadi. It is edited and managed by M.Basavapunna Rao who is the General Secretary of RAI chapter in A.P. This publication is associated with Hema Publications which also publishes material on rationalism and humanism in other parts of the country. In addition to this publication, A.Bappa Rao is running a school called Viveka Vidyalayam – to propagate rationalist ideas among children. In the state of Kerala, RAI runs two Malayalam magazines called Yukti Rajyam and Sooryagatha. Sreeni Pattathanam and C.I.Oomen manage these publications, respectively. RAI has many intellectuals and writers in its organizational fold and they aim at a philosophical and socio-cultural revolution for the transformation of society. In an effort to spread secular and rationalist values radicals are working with other similar organizations in various parts of the country. Among these the notable one is Bihar Buddhiwadi Samaj (Bihar Rationalist Society).
6.3.4. Bihar Buddhivadi Samaj (BBS)

This organization was established in 1985 as a non-party, non-profit educational society for promoting rationalism, humanism, atheism and secularism. To achieve its objectives, BBS has been publishing rationalist literature in the form of books, pamphlets, leaflets etc mainly in Hindi so that it reaches a wider audience in Bihar. The most important of these publications is a Hindi quarterly called Buddhivadi, which was launched in 1987 and is currently in circulation.\(^{27}\) The Founder President of BBS, Dr. Ramendra, established Buddhivadhi Foundation in 1996. Dr Kavaljeet is the Managing Trustee of the organization. Among the other activities of this Foundation, mention may be made of the setting up of a Study and Research Centre and an institute called Priya Academy for promoting computer literacy and scientific outlook in cooperation with BBS. A research project titled, "Rationalist, Humanist and Atheistic Trends in 20\(^{th}\) Century Indian thought was taken up by Dr Ramendra in collaboration with Dr Kavaljeet with a view to publish a book containing brief life sketches and philosophical ideas of seven important thinkers, namely, Periyar, M.N.Roy, Ambedkar, Goru, Kovoor, A.B.Shah, Ramswaroop Verma and Narsingh Narain. BBS is an associate member of IIHEU and also a member of the core group of the South Asian Humanist Network (SAHN)\(^{28}\).

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\(^{27}\) Since 1998 the publication of Buddhivadhi has been taken over by the Buddhivadhi Foundation (registered educational Trust), a sister organization of BRS. This Foundation also launched a Newsletter as occasional publication in English and its first issue was published in May 1997. BBS and the Foundation, besides bringing out a number of publications has been involved in organizing meetings, seminars and conferences and other meetings such as miracle busting campaigns. In an effort to fight casteism these organizations have been organizing inter-dinning and inter-caste marriages.

\(^{28}\) SAHN was constituted as Indian Humanist Coordination Committee in 1995 with Babu Gogineni as the Founder General Secretary of the group. The main focus of this outfit is to outreach the regional domain. The main concern of this was to mobilize efforts in spreading democracy, rationalism, sustain human rights fight poverty, over population, fundamentalist revivalism etc. The joint efforts on behalf of SAHN have resulted in organizational and personal humanist contacts in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Mauritius and also attracted attention among the potential humanist partners around the sub-continent.


3.5. Atheist Centre

In Andhra Pradesh a number of radical humanist activists are functioning in association with Atheist center. This Centre was established by Mr Gora and his wife Mrs. Saraswathi Gora in 1940 in Mudnur Villiage in Krishna District, which was later shifted to Vijaywada in 1947. Since then, it has been at the forefront to promote atheism, humanism and social change. The Centre under the leadership of Gora had undertaken a number of activities relating to primarily atheism until his demise in 1975. After this period, Mrs Saraswathi Gora, the co-founder of the Centre continued the work in association with various like minded groups of humanists and atheists striving to bring about social change on the basis of scientific outlook. One of the main activities of the Centre is to provide social-psychological counseling to women and men. Its main priority is to fight against untouchability and casteism and towards this end the Centre had taken up the programmes of inter caste marriages and inter-dinning. Another important objective of the Centre is to dispel superstitions and to promote scientific outlook and rational thinking. Fire walking demonstrations, exploding the myth of miracles and dispelling the fear of witch craft and sorcery are part of its programmes. Gora Science Centre organizes periodic science and environment exhibitions. A permanent Science Exhibition has been set up at Atheist Centre in Sir Hermann Bondi Hall.

Atheist Centre has also been carrying on comprehensive rural development programmes through an organization called Arthik Samata Mandal (Association for Economic Equality) and Samaskar. It operates in 150 villages of four districts of Andhra

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29 In 1989, the Atheist Centre organized a unity march on foot for 70 days covering a distance of 1400 kms in four riot torn districts of Andhra. In late 1980s, the Centre also organized a foot march from Gandhi's Ashram in Sewagram, near Nagpur, to Delhi covering a distance of 1000 miles in 100 days. The Centre is also spreading sex education and Dr G. Samaram wrote on sex science in popular Telugu Daily for five
Adesh striving for comprehensive rural development covering a broad spectrum of health, education, mother and child care, polio corrective surgeries, rural eye camps and wasteland development. Another outfit called Vasavya Mahila Mandal runs a working women's hostel and involves in rural development. The Centre also initiated Swetcha Gora Eye Bank for free cornea grafting operations. Another offshoot of the Centre is the Samskar, which is working for socio-psychological rehabilitation of the ex-criminals. It also took up the programmes for eradication Jogini System that is remnant of Devdasi System. The Atheist Centre has been involved in publishing literature and journals, Atheist Monthly in English and Nasthika Margam in Telugu. Several of Gora's books have been translated into different languages. The Centre was honoured with The International Humanist Award in 1986. The Centre celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1990 and from 1970s to late 1990s; the Centre organized four international world atheist conferences. Through its diverse and varied activities, the Centre is trying to develop atheism as a positive way of life.

6.3.6. Indian Humanist Union (IHU)

Narsingh Narain constituted IHU as Society for Promotion of Freedom of Thought in 1954 at Allahabad. In 1960 this Society was rechristened as IHU. The main objective of the Union is diffusion of knowledge concerning moral and social problems from the humanist point of view. IHU basically stands for love for fellow beings and scientific spirit of free enquiry. The Union was affiliated to IIHEU as an associate

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He wrote extensively for Indian and International journals. He attended World Humanist Congresses in 1957 (London); 1962 (Oslo) and 1970 (Boston). His input into humanist thinking was most significant in respect of some basic questions like: theism and atheism in relation to humanism; the role and scope of reason; the distinction between moral and spiritual values; the nature of secularism; the concept of humanism as a religion etc.
member. In 1996 IHU initiated a journal called The Humanist Outlook devoted to promoting scientific attitude, ethical values, social reform and communal harmony. IHU shares its objectives with IRHA and the thoughts of M.N.Roy. As the Proceedings of 14th World Congress of IHEU held in January 1999, Mumbai, observes the:

IHU is devoted primarily to the furtherance of human values and the building of a more human society through an ethics based on human perceptions and capabilities without linking it with any supra-human entity, that is, on assessments made in a spirit of reason and free enquiry. Its endeavors are oriented towards attitudinal changes among humanists and others through diverse means like bringing out a quarterly journal and other publications, development of humanist music cassettes staging of street plays, holding of periodic discussions, Symposia and Seminars as well as collaborative network linked voluntary social work.

Apart from carrying out the renaissance work in tandem with the above mentioned organizations involved with more or less the similar task of spreading humanistic and rationalist values we find RHM is also engaged in political activities as it is very much a political movement as well. The idea of decentralization and participatory democracy forms the core of radical democracy to bring about social transformation. We find a number of radical humanists are working through various organizations among women, the youth, the unemployed, that is, the marginal sections of the society in an attempt to make them aware of their political rights and civil liberties so that they can appreciate the values of freedom and democracy. They need to be armed with these values in order to assert themselves and fight against poverty, unjust and inequitable social order as articulated in the philosophical and pragmatic ideology of Roy.

In India we have witnessed a growth of many NGOs and new social movements particularly since the middle of 1980s who have been advocating a paradigm of development in which peoples participation is given a prominent place. This paradigm views the established institutions like the state, government and political parties as
instruments in the hands of the elite to perpetuate the power. This view was very much implicit in Roy’s conception of Peoples Committees at the grass root levels. Even though these NGOs vary in their objectives and may have limited aims, nevertheless they can be conceived as a part of country-wide movement for attaining a genuine democracy—a democracy in which the political power will reside with the people. The emergence of these voluntary non-party organizations which are trying to make people increasingly aware of their human rights and helping people to protect and promote them can be viewed as a hopeful development at grass root level as is affirmed by Late Tarkunde time and again (Tarkunde...). A number of radical humanists are trying to work with these NGOs in various states at grass root level with a view to disseminate democratic values among masses particularly in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir. It is pertinent here to briefly discuss the work and activities of some important organizations in this context.

6.3.7. Streehitkarini (SHK)

SHK was established in 1965 by Dr Indumati Parikh who was inspired by the humanist ideals of Roy. It is a women’s organization with a programme to help women lead healthy and free life in the slums of Bombay. Over the last 39 years it has been practicing the humanist ideas at the grass roots pragmatically exploring and evolving their new agenda of needed inputs and implementing the same in slums. SHK started by a group of educated middle class women; it gradually gained the confidence of the women of the slums by discovering at first hand what the women’s real needs were and by empowering the women of the slums themselves in helping meet them.

It has developed an integrated programme of women’s development in backward areas of Bombay now catering to the needs of 150000 people from the slums. SHK
believes that a woman to lead a healthy, free and full life she has to have education, accept family planning as a way of life and participate in income generation. Non-formal education forms the basis its programmes and the women who are trained and motivated to do all the fieldwork form the backbone of their programmes. Among the various activities evolved by SHR, the important ones initiated in 1960s are the mother and child clinic, family planning, non-formal education, kindergarten and immunization programme and child nutrition. In addition to these programmes, SHK has recently launched activities like library and book banks, film shows, gynaecology and fertility clinic, a well baby clinic, mobile medical clinic and vocation training for income generation with the micro-credit scheme. This organization also initiated vocational training programmes in sewing, flower making and fabric painting. In 2004 they have set up a handloom unit in which women are trained to weave dusters and mats. SHK has mobilized some private industrial houses like the Dorabji Tata Trust and TELCO to support and join in the programmes relating to child health, immunization and mobile medical clinics since 1987. SHK is also mobilizing international support from agencies such as Ford Foundation to aid projects relating to health and womens welfare. The other institution from which SHK obtains support is IHEU. Dr Parikh’s ambition now is to see the success of SHK replicated firstly in other poor districts of Bombay and later in other parts of India. In order to scale up the project, she shifted her base from SHK to its sister NGO, the Centre for Study of Social Change.

6.3.8. Centre for the Study of Social Change (CSSC)

Eminent radicals like Tarkateeth Lakhmamshastri Joshi, G.D.Parikh, A.B.Shah, N.V.Sovani and Govindrao, S.Talwalkar established CSSC in 1972. It is a Centre of study, research and action with a difference. It is not primarily interested in duplicating
or exploring the routine area of academic research, but to bring together specialists and activists in different disciplines and also the administrators and policy makers for conducting research and other activities for finding solutions to the problems confronting any developing democratic society. The Centre seeks to involve the workers at the grass root level along with others specialists and administrators. The Centre’s approach is essentially problem oriented and interdisciplinary on theoretical and practical levels, whereas its educational work has the purpose of promoting the social understanding and functional efficiency of those who seek to benefit from it. The Centre tries to bridge the gap between knowledge and activity. In addition to these stated core principles, the CSSC is also working to promote the following objectives:

a) To establish and support institutions devoted to creating a modern, humane and free society in India;
b) To establish and conduct educational and cultural and research institutions with high standards of scholarship and research, establish residential and physical facilities and publish books, periodicals, pamphlets and other literature in consonance with the objectives of the Centre;
c) To organize study groups, seminars, conferences, summer schools, extension programmes, public meetings and the like for dissemination of modern knowledge and rational understanding of social and cultural problems facing the citizens of India;
d) To promote growth of a rational and critical spirit, relying on scientific knowledge and inspired by universal human values viz., freedom, equality, secularism and social justice; and
c) To undertake any other activities, which are likely to promote aforesaid objectives without any discrimination based on caste, creed, gender or language.

The CSSC is involved in a number of varied activities, as mentioned here under, to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

*Prof G.D.Parikh Memorial Fund:* It started in 1978 to mainly concentrate on educational activities. Apart from giving scholarships to students excelling in economics,
G.D. Parikh Memorial Award is given to a person or an institution in India for excellent work in the field of education. It carries an award of Rs 10,000/- and a citation.\textsuperscript{31} From 1978 non-formal education camps were held in various districts of Maharashtra. Under this Fund a public and children's library was also set up.

**Rural Development:** From Junnar Tehsil from where Prof Parikh hailed, ten adivasi villages were adopted for development after an intensive study in collaboration with Chhatrapati Shivaji Mahavidyalaya, Junnar, Maharashtra. The work was handed over to this college after 1985. Closely related to the work of rural development the CSSC organizes a number of seminars, lectures and undertakes research studies relating to rural employment, slums and social change, medical and health welfare etc.

**Institutions:** Important institutions created by CSSC in collaboration with SHK are: Women's Development Centre and Vocational Training Institute for Women; and Institute for Training and Research in Primary Health Care and Urban Slums. Apart from SHK it has been working with IRHA which strives to bring large mass of people in Third World to a human level of existence through various activities.

The most significant institution created by CSSC in collaboration with IRHA is **M.N. Roy Human Development Campus,\textsuperscript{32} Bombay,** in 1990. The CSSC proposes to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice and as well as intellectual philosophers and grass root workers through the medium of human development campus. The ideas of Roy forms the core foundation of the Campus. In practical terms, the Campus aims at

\textsuperscript{31} The award for 2003 was given to Eklavya Group for doing excellent work in Bhopal for innovative approaches to science education.

\textsuperscript{32} The Campus is still under construction at a prime location in F-346 (6), Bandra Kurla Complex. The Maharashtra Government granted the land measuring 1.067 hectares. The campus is conceived as a place where scholars and other people connected with human development activities come together. The campus when completed in couple of years will have a full-fledged library and residential complex. It also has facilities for conferences and seminars. It is indeed the biggest human development campus in the Third World.
encouraging development of women, men and children in an integrated manner so as to bring about a social change in themselves to face the various problems. The Campus attempts to encourage interaction between the intellectuals who conceived the plans and grass root people who are targets of such plans so as to minimize the divide between the two.

6.4. Individual pursuits

Our data reveals a number of individual radicals have found acclaim and appreciation for their activities they have been engaged in at the local, regional or national level. Majority of them are well educated and occupy important positions in society. Amongst them have been college and university professors, lawyers, writers, journalists, trade union officials, artists. We find most of them to be true to the spirit of RIHM in their professional pursuits. Empirical exploration carried out on some of the leading figures of the RIHM reveals how individuals, though scattered in different parts of India, are able to sustain the spirit of the movement in a significant manner by way of intellectual and activist pursuits. What follows is the brief notes on the contribution of some of the leading actors of RIHM.

V.M. Tarkunde

Among the veterans and dedicated radicals, Tarkunde can be said to be the leading light and dynamo of RIHM ever since its inception more particularly since the formation of IRHA in 1969, which coincided with his retirement as judge from Bombay High Court. Tarkunde is among closest associates of Roy and was actively involved with evolution of

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33 I have interviewed and discussed with several leading figures of the RIHM at different points to time. What is presented here in the subsequent section on individual pursuits are the synoptic summary of their activities, views and contribution for sustaining the RIHM.
Roy’s ideas since 1936. Prior to this Tarkunde had joined the congress socialist party in 1935 and became the joint General Secretary of the Maharashtra CSP. In 1942 he left his legal practice for working whole time in RDP. He was General Secretary of RDP from 1944 to 1948 till its dissolution. Thereafter he has been one of its most important leaders and has been instrumental in keeping the movement alive particularly since formation of IRHA in 1969. Tarkunde was the President of IRHA from 1969 to 1990. In April 1970, he took over the editorship of RH which till then was a weekly journal published from Calcutta. It was brought to Delhi and converted into a monthly and Tarkunde continued to be its editor for over two decades. Though the journal was shifted to Mumbai in January 1998 and its editorship was changed, he continued as Editor Emeritus writing regularly for the journal despite his advanced age.

As we have seen in 1974 Tarkunde in cooperation with Jaiprakash Narayan was the founder of CFD for the purpose of defending and strengthening democracy in India. Tarkunde assumed the responsibility of being its secretary with J.P as its president and later discharged his duties as president of the organization. During emergency, another organization PUCL was formed in September 1976 with J.P as its president and Tarkunde as working president. After JP passed away, Mr Tarkunde carried on the work relentlessly till the end of his life. He can be described as the father of the Human Rights Organizations and human rights movement in the country. In 1980 PUCL became a membership organization with branches all over India and Tarkunde became its president. In 1984, he ceased to be its president but was elected its adviser. Tarkunde was active throughout the emergency in defending civil liberties and democratic rights through courts of law and by working through CFD and PUCL and as editor of RH. He was also the chairman of various committees, which investigated into killing of alleged naxalites
through fake encounters. He was also the convener of two committees appointed for Electoral reforms. Tarkunde’s Committee on problems of Kashmir, on the terrorist problems in Punjab and the Electoral reforms have been a source of inspiration for NGOs and human rights activists. Although these organizations were not formed under the banner of RHM formally yet we find more than 80% of members of IRHA and IRI have been actively working through them with their radical ideas providing them the theoretical framework and credit for providing some concrete platform for organized activities to radicals who had hitherto been functioning as scattered, alienated individuals goes primarily to none other than Tarkunde. So one can say, as has been conceded by radicals themselves, the movement owes its sustenance to the organizational efforts of Tarkunde.

His contribution to the growth and diffusion of ideas has also been considerable as apart from looking after RH, expressing his ideas regularly through its columns since its inception, his book Radical Humanism, published in 1983, and collection of his writings For Freedom brought out by ‘V.M.Tarkunde Felicitation Committee’ on his 75th Birth anniversary in 1984, has contributed to the spread of humanist ideas to some extent. The commendable role he has played in formation and working of CFD and PUCL, which we have already discussed, has earned him international recognition. The IHEU conferred on him International Humanist award in 1978 in London for the contribution he made to preserve democratic rights during emergency period. In 1984, he was awarded the title of

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34 For full biography see M.A.Rane, “V.M.Tarkunde-A Restless Crusador For Human Freedom” which was released at a public meeting convened by the Bombay branch of the IRHA, CFD and PUCL in July 1999 to felicitate Mr V.M.Tarkunde on his 90th Birthday. This commemorative volume edited by Rane consists of tributes paid to Tarkunde by several luminaries like justice Krishna Iyer, both former judges of supreme court, Prof Rajanl Kothari, Mr Paul Kurtz, former president, IHEU, Mr. K.G.Kannabiran, president PUCL. (RH oct 1999 p 31)
Humanist Laureate' by the Academy of Humanism, U.S.A. He was also a recipient of nation's high civic award Padma Bhushan conferred on him in 1998.

It is really sad that during the course of writing this thesis, Tarkunde often referred to as the champion of human rights and doyen of democratic rights and civil liberties movement in India passed away on March 22, 2004. This surely comes as a blow not only to the RHM but also to all those who are concerned with Democracy, Human Rights, Humanism, rationalism and secularism more particularly in south Asia. Rich tributes were paid to him by eminent personalities from different walks of life like R.Narayanan former president of India, Rajani Kothari, Justice A.S. Anand, Shanti Bhushan, Ashok Desai, Kuldip Nayyar, B.G.Vergese, Arun Shourie among others associated with humanist movement at international level. Various non governmental groups and institutions like PUCL, CFD, IRI, IRHA, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Foundation for Democracy and communal Amity, Minorities Council, Human Rights Trust, Co-ordination Committee on Kashmir came together in the capital to express their sense of loss at Tarkunde's death. This is a testimony to the variety of causes, which he espoused and struggled for over more than seven decades of his involvement in the public life. A man of immense public integrity and honesty Tarkunde's loss to the RHM will be irreparable as many humanist leaders and actors involved in the movement sought inspiration and guidance from him and were emotionally dependent on him in a manner similar to their dependence on Roy in the initial stages of the RHM.
A prolific writer both in Bengali and English, he has over twenty books and innumerable articles to his credit. He has been editor of Jijnasa, a quarterly of ideas since 1980. It would be difficult to evaluate the contribution Sib Ray has made to RHM in quantitative terms, as being a literary figure his contribution has been in the realm of ideas. While going through his varied writings one can see how he has been trying to extend Roy's philosophy (which has almost complete endorsement of the author) to the fields of human activity like arts, music which remained untouched by Roy. Being a student and teacher of literature, in fact his very first book in Bengali 'Prekshit' (perspective), published in 1945 which was a brilliant collection of essays in literary criticism on modern European poets and authors won him wide appreciation. In 1946, after having come in contact with Roy, was published Radicalism, a systematic exposition of social philosophy of Radical Democracy. His other works include fascinating books like In Man's Own Image, The World Her Village on Ellen Roy and several edited works. It is however not possible to go into details about his writings but one can see Sib Ray was all along trying to propagate Roy's philosophy through his writings more particularly through his writings in Bengali which had larger circulation in West Bengal.

If we try to gloss over Sib Ray's contribution through the various phases in the development of RHM one can see that Roy's death came as an immediate set back for the weekly journal RH, the most important mouth piece of the movement. Its readership fell

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55 Sibarayan Ray from Calcutta, who worked very closely with rays from 1946-54 and then with Ellen till her death in 1960 has immensely contributed to the intellectual side of RHM. Born in 1921, Sib Ray graduated from Calcutta University in 1940. An intellectual in his own right he has worked as professor in Calcutta college, Bombay and California. In 1963, he went abroad and accepted an appointment as chairman of the Department of Indian Studies at the university of Melbourne, Australia. In 1981, he returned to India after teaching abroad for eighteen years. He was director, Rabindra Bhavan, Visva Bharati University.
alarmingly (from 5000 to 1500 according to M.V. Ramaswamy). But despite great odds and a growing sense of frustration, the journal continued to appear regularly. Here perhaps SibRay's contribution was greatest. The loss of the founder - editor no doubt deprived its readers of his thought provoking and highly educative writings that had appeared regularly since April 1937. But still the journal was fortunate in having Ellen and Sibnarayan Ray as joint editors after Roy's death. Both of them being very close to Roy, had learnt a great deal from him. A survey of the paper between 1954-60 shows that it was able to maintain its previous standard and many a outstanding intellectuals from India and abroad continued to contribute to it regularly and the credit for this goes to Sibnarayan Ray. His contribution to the RHM was primarily to the intellectual side of the movement. In his writings and editorials he was trying to indicate, develop and apply Roy's ideas to various fields of Social life. Between the period 1954-60 Sibnarayan Ray wrote regularly on various subjects with a humanist perspective. He contributed immensely to the intellectual side of the movement as he was trying to extend his philosophy to areas that had not been touched upon adequately by Roy. Under the careful guidance of Ellen and SibRay, the RH continued to examine the Social and political problems of the country in the light of rational and humanist outlook as suggested by the philosophy of New Humanism. The stand of the RH in favor of cultural renaissance, academic freedom, individual freedom and secular ethics and against any kind of authoritarianism i.e. concentration of power, centralized economy, regimentation in education etc. is clearly represented in various articles published in the journal during the period between 1954-60.

So one can say Sib Ray did contribute to the growth and development of ideas to some extent. But his contribution to the RHM as a whole remained marginal as the
areas in which he was basically interested (art and music) and of which as he himself revealed during the course of interview, he had a better understanding were of no or little interest to other radicals. He writes, "—By and large the Indian radicals were, and to my knowledge still are, virtually obsessed with moral, political and intellectual issues—Indian radicals have no more than a marginal interest in music, poetry, or the theater, and their sense of wonder or curiosity in the presence of nature has rarely been cultivated ---. Paradoxical though this may appear to be, neither nature, nor art is greatly prized by the majority of Indian radicals even though following Roy, they stress the importance of a renaissance in India; the sub continent’s flora and fauna mean as little to them as the sculptures of karli and Khajuraho or the paintings of Kangra and Basholi. The renaissance they talk about is essentially moral and intellectual in its conception; the sensuous and the aesthetic have yet to gain proper recognition in their weltanschauung."

More over Sib Ray has written a great deal in Bengali and there has been no attempt to translate his writings in English or other regional languages. As a result his original ideas have reached a very limited section and therefore his ideas though invaluable in terms of the intellectual content have contributed to the development of Radical humanist philosophy and movement as a whole in a limited sense. More so because at a very critical juncture in development of the movement we find Sib Ray left the country in 1961 after Ellen’s death for eighteen long years. Rather than filling the void that was created by Ellen’s death, he chose an escapist path, may be because it was too traumatic for him to come to terms with sudden and brutal death of Ellen with whom he had shared a long, close and a very special relationship. One can only conjecture, things might have been different for the movement, had he remained in India and provided the much needed intellectual leadership to the movement. In fact he failed to perform the
kind of role Ellen had played in keeping the movement alive after Roy was no more. It is not to suggest that he ceased to work in carrying forward Roy’s philosophy while he was away from the scene. He did try in his own way to spread it from abroad.

After coming back to India in 1981, apart from discharging his responsibility of editor of a quarterly journal Jijnasa in Bengali and other intellectual pursuits relating to development of humanist ideas, the most important work that Sib Ray took upon himself was that he accepted from IRI and M.N.Roy centenary celebration organizing committee the responsibility of editing the Selected Works Of M.N.Roy in six volumes. The project though was initially planned in six volumes, but for reasons of health and other pressing commitments, Sib Ray has edited four volumes covering Roy’s selected works from 1917-1936. Four volumes have already been published by Oxford University Press. For the purpose the material relating to life and works of Roy has been collected over the years. Information has been gathered by having long and intense discussions with many individuals who were closely associated with Roy and by collecting documents from a number of libraries and organizations spread over a dozen countries.

Sibnarayan Ray with his scholarly erudition has executed this extremely difficult task of editing the writings of a prolific writer like Roy. The fact that Sib Ray undertook this arduous, time consuming and demanding research project without seeking any financial remuneration, honorarium or royalty for himself speaks a great deal about his commitment to the cause of bringing to limelight the generally neglected revolutionary thinker of twentieth century, a thinker who has been a constant source of inspiration to the author all these years. Sib Ray’s work on this project on which he has invested almost ten long years is indeed a work of immense value and will undoubtedly go a long way in
making Roy's rare and inspiring works accessible to future generations of scholars. It can in fact be regarded as the best source book on Roy's life and works between 1917-1936. The remaining work on initially planned two volumes covering the later period of Roy's will perhaps be taken up by some other scholar.

R.L. Nigam

R.L. Nigam, a quiet, soft-spoken, an introvert by nature, a thorough gentleman, a man of convictions, holding independent views could be regarded as an invaluable asset to the movement. His contribution can be seen both at intellectual and organizational level. He has been a regular contributor to the independent India Radical Humanist. He was the editor of the Radical Humanist weekly during 1960s and later assumed the responsibility of the Associate Editor of the same when it was converted into a monthly journal. A review of his articles and editorials over the years reveal his commitment and concern for the RHM and its philosophy. Nigam, through his clear, cogent, pragmatic and dispassionate writings was able to provoke serious thinking and debates among radicals, persuading them to re-examine various controversial issues (like ones pertaining to need for an organization for RHM at a critical stage when movement appeared to be at a point of extinction or on question of relationship of RHM with CCF etc) as is evident through the columns of RH Nigam's articles have appeared in major dailies and other periodicals on sociological, cultural and political subjects.

Published in 1988, Radical Humanism Of M.N. Roy - An Exposition Of His 22 Thesis can be regarded as the most important work by Nigam which will go a long way in

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56 R.L. Nigam though not a leader in the conventional sense of the term can be regarded as one who made tremendous contribution to RHM since inception. A teacher by profession, he retired as Head of the department of English literature from D.A.V. postgraduate college, Dehradun. He came in contact with Roy in 1940-41 and was closely associated with RHM and various institutions founded by Roy, till his death.
popularizing Roy's philosophy on New Humanism. Nigam on the basis of his own experience realized that the aphoristic manner in which the 22 theses have been presented makes it difficult for most people to receive them actively. The thesis are not given as axiomatic truths, they have been arrived at, through an interaction of accumulated stock of knowledge and experience tested in crucible of reason and critical thought and Nigam was all along a part of this whole intricate process of formulation of 22 thesis and he therefore feels it is important that one views them in the context of the whole process of genesis, development and its significance along with some of the intricate questions involved. Through *Exposition*, he has tried to draw attention to some of the knottier formulations and also to some of their controversial points, not with a view to establish any new position but to stimulate an inquiry of the thesis in their particular and proper context. So this work of Nigam is in fact a rich tribute to Roy who as Nigam himself concedes played an influential role in shaping of his ideas and his philosophy of life and Nigam was one of those rare individuals who lived his philosophy both in personal and professional life till his death.

Apart from making academic contributing to the movement Nigam was also instrumental in keeping the movement going in organizational sense. Immediately after Ellan's death, it was he who took upon himself the responsibility of looking after all the affairs of Indian Renaissance Institute which had been the hub of humanists activities since 1936-37. From 1961-62 to 1981 Nigam served as secretary of the IRI and was also on the research committee of the institute. He also had been the in charge of M.N.Roy archives, which remains an invaluable source on Roy's life and writings.
Karnik was very active in Trade union movement in the country. He was the first General Secretary of the RDP and Indian Federation of Labor (IFL), both founded by Roy. He was also the Managing Director of the *Independent India* weekly since the publication of its first issue on April 4, 1937. As has been mentioned earlier, despite desperate position the weekly found itself in financially, Karnik with his meager resources, spent his last penny for it and was able to publish the journal without any break. Karnik has written several books on trade union movement with a humanist perspective. His publications include *Indian Trade Unions: A survey: Indian Labour-Problems and Prospects: Strikes in India* and *M.N. Roy: A political Biography*.

**M.A. Rane**

M.A. Rane, a senior advocate and an active radical humanist from Bombay has made a tremendous contribution to RHMs for almost half a century. A life long activist in RHMs, a founding member of the CFD and PUCL, Rane came to prominence during emergency period when he along with small band of activists organized protest meetings and appeared almost on daily basis, in the Bombay High Court in cases of preventive detention. He has always been very sensitive to events around him and he has made an invaluable contribution to promotion and preservation of Human rights and Civil liberties. Recognizing his contribution to the cause, Maharashtra state Human Rights Commission observed Human Rights Day on 10th December 2003, by organizing a

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37 V. B. Karnik, from Bombay was among the early associates of Roy on Indian scene. Born in May 1903 Karnik began his political career by joining the Non cooperation movement in 1921 while he was still in college. He came in contact with Roy soon after he arrived in India in December 1930 as Dr. Mahmood. Thereafter he became a member of the Roy group which was formed in the first or second week of 1931 and remained actively and closely associated with Roy in all his activities and played an important role in RHMs many years after Roy was no more.
special function to felicitate him. The citation presented to Rane on the occasion reads, ‘in the ranks of those who stand for freedom, the championship of human rights and civil liberties, M.A. Rane stands amongst the tallest. A champion of the poor, the downtrodden, and the oppressed; a fearless and doughty fighter for upholding fundamental rights and civil liberties, M.A. Rane’s entire public life has been dedicated to the cause of freedom’ (Radical Humanist, January, 2004, p. 20).

Throughout his life Rane has been fighting for just causes like, taking up the cases of persons victimized by the state, custodial violence and deaths in police custody, the displacement of tribals, the murder of innocents in police encounters the dangers of unsafe nuclear installations etc. Apart from this he has written a great deal on varied topics which include human rights, civil liberties, corruption and accountability, the Indian polity, communalism and most importantly on “Law, Lawyers, Judges and Justice delivery system” in the country. He has been instrumental in keeping the RHM alive by regularly organizing public meetings and workshops on the above-related subjects under the banner of IRHA in collaboration with other organs of the movement like IRI, CSSP etc.

C.T. Daru

Late shri C.T. Daru a calm dispassionate personality from Gujarat was another eminent humanist to whom RHM owes a lot in keeping the movement alive. To begin with Daru was a trade unionist and labor in Gujarat found in him a selfless and devoted champion of their cause. He fought many a legal battles for the workers. Many of the principles of industrial and labor laws can be traced to Mr. Daru’s expertise and drafting abilities. His contribution during emergency was particularly great when he became the
symbol of resistance in Gujarat and was arrested for seven months. He fought and won many cases against government. He successfully fought an attempt to impose Gujarati as the sole medium of instruction at Gujarat University. He also defended the ‘Bhumiputra’ and ‘Sadhana’ journals against censorship laws during emergency. His life was a relentless fight against forces of irrationalism, communalism, obscurantism and oppressive social and religious customs.

**Durgashankar Trivedi, Jayanti Patel and Gautam Thacker**

From Gujarat we may mention the name of Durgashankar Trivedi another veteran Radical Humanist who was associated with Roy since party days and who continued to work for the movement till his death in 1998 when he was the president of the IRHA, Gujarat unit. He was a close associate of Daru and was instrumental in publication of a daily paper called “swatantra Bharat” in 1940-41 which no printing press was prepared to publish as it was anti establishment. He was close to Ellen who requested him to spend a few months at Dehradun to classify and prepare notes of over eleven thousand articles and letters of Roy which were lying in haphazard manner. At practical level he worked for development and upliftment of Sarkhej village near Ahmedabad where he hailed from. At present radicals like Dr.Jayanti Patel, Gautam Thaker in association with other activists, and NGOs inspired by Gandhian ideology, sarvodaya workers from various areas, kisan leaders etc, are engaged in an experiment called ‘Loktantrik Abhiyan’ in few selected villages. The aim is to organize people for self rule in specific areas by educating them and making them aware of their rights and their collective power. It can in fact be regarded as an experiment in setting up of people’s committees of Roy’s notion of decentralized Radical democracy.
Late G.D. Parikh, co-author of 'The people's plan' along with Tarkunde and Binay Banerjee, was one of the few intellectuals from Maharashtra who contributed significantly to the development of humanist ideas. He was a very distinguished economist and educationist. In July 1958, at the age of forty three he was appointed as the Rector of the Bombay University. He tried his hands at many things. He took the initiative in organizing the teachers of the university. He became editor of Humanist Review, a quarterly journal that was launched in January 1969. Two years later, after publication of eight issues it was merged with 'Quest' and Parikh became its co-editor along with V.V. John and A.B. Shah. He founded the Centre for the study of social change in 1972 of which he remained chairman till his death. The centre emphasised interdisciplinary research relating to problems confronting us as a developing, democratic society. Parikh's close associates including Tarkateerth Laxmanshastri Joshi, W.S. Kane, G.R. Dalvi, late Prof. Nigam were associated with it in various academic capacities like formulating the courses, organising memorial lectures. Dr. D.S. Kothari, eminent scientist and ex-chairman of UGC was the first recipient of All India Educational award instituted by the centre and delivered his memorial lecture on science and values on 30th March 1979.

Dr Indumati Parikh

G.D. Parikh's wife, Dr. Indumati Parikh, a general medical practitioner by profession was closely associated with the Centre for Studies of Social Change (CSSC), Mumbai. For the last four decades, she has been carrying on the work of spreading humanism at grass root level. Her humanist approach to improving to social conditions emphasizes education and empowerment of women. In early 1960s she moved to live in one of the worst slums in Bombay, where she set up a medical center to take health care
had basic health education programmes relating to hygiene among the slum dwellers. A woman's organization called *Streehitkarini* (meaning welfare of women) was set up in 1960s to help women lead healthy, freer and fuller life. Over the last four decades, she has promoted family planning by developing an integrated programme of women's development in backward areas of Bombay catering to the needs of 150,000 population, which is economically, socially and educationally underprivileged. Dr Mrs Parikh has over 100 co-workers and these volunteers include some of the leading doctors of Bombay along with many women in the slums. Her task can in fact be seen as humanism in practice. Success of various programmes undertaken by her shows how in contemporary existential context, only an untiring organized effort to propagate the radical humanist ideology among disoriented and underprivileged people by way of participating in their struggle can yield the desired results of gradual emancipation of underprivileged and rapid expansion of human freedom.

It is only by replicating similar experiences and strategies, that is, combining education and struggle among different marginalized sections in different parts of the country, a healthier increasingly democratic society on a radical humanist basis can be created, one in which individuals be freer, more enlightened and mutually helpful. This process undoubtedly a gradual but there seems to be no other alternative. Dr Mrs. Parikh's contribution to the RHM has been substantial in that she is among the few radical humanists who are working as activists at the grass root level and shows how even scattered individual radical humanists can make a difference and can put their philosophy of radical humanism in practice. Dr. Mrs Parikh's contribution has been recognized not only at the national level but her work is acclaimed at the international level as she is the recipient of the Humanist Award by the International Humanist and Ethical Union.
Names of Balraj Puri and late Prof. Yadava immediately come to mind when one thinks about individuals from within the RHM, who from the very beginning of their association with the movement, always had something different to offer in terms of both theory and practice of the movement from what may be termed as orthodox Royism. Born in July 1922, Prof. Yadava from Meerut will always be remembered as a lovable, humane individual who was every inch a rationalist and radical in his ideas. He was a selfless and a fearless man with courage of conviction, a man who lived his philosophy and influenced innumerable number of people who came in his contact over a long period of his professional life as a professor at Meerut, by being a true friend, philosopher and guide to them. A profound scholar, greatly influenced by writings of Karl Marx, Harold Laski, Bertrand Russell, Jawaharlal Nehru and M.N. Roy among others, Prof. Yadava actively participated in RHM since December 1948 inspite of his disagreement with Roy’s idea of ‘partyless politics. He was an intellectual in his own right and played a significant role in shaping up socio-political events particularly at regional level pertaining to Meerut, which in a way was his karm bhum. He was a non-conformist and worked for promotion of secular, rationalist and humanist values among students, minorities and others. He was an atheist and a rationalist and contributed significantly to the rationalist movement in India particularly during the period, he was the president of the movement. His secularist credentials were never in doubt and he invariably, swam courageously against the current of popular prejudices particularly during the innumerable communal riots that broke out in Meerut during his lifetime. Even during the most horrendous riots in 1987, which resulted in almost total polarization of communities, he worked tirelessly for the cause of communal harmony and tolerance between Hindus and
Muslims. He ceaselessly campaigned for human rights through state units of CFD, PUCL and other social and political forums he was associated with. An admirer of Nehru, he always advocated a synthesis of Nehruvian and Royist thought to tide over the various problems and crisis that gripped our society.

Gour Kishore Ghosh

Among the radicals from West Bengal, apart from SibRay, we may mention the name of internationally known literary personality and a civil liberties activist, Gour Kishore Ghosh(1923-2000) recipient of Magsay-say award for keeping alive the humanistic values. A journalist associated with Anand Bazar Patrika and a prolific Bengali writer, Gour Kishore has rendered an endless service to humanity by his fearless writings in his struggle for human rights. He was an active member of the RDP until its dissolution. He was a member of the National council of the PUCL for a number of years. Though His formal education had to end at the Intermediate class, but he rose to be one of the best known and the most influential editors, writers, satirists, and novelists in Bengali. Rupadarshi of Desh (a Bengali weekly, now a fortnightly) and Gauranda kavi of Ananda Bazar Patrika (his pseudonyms) were household names with Bengali readers. No other column—both political and social satire—has ever been so popular and powerful as the Rupadarshi. It exposed the corrupt, including politicians in a fortnight and outspoken manner. One of the reasons for his popularity was that he put his ideas and thoughts into practice, he identified himself with the victims, he was a fearless activist. Gour da as he was lovingly called by his associates, did not live an ivory tower existence. He was down to earth and altruistic.
He was founder editor of Aajkal, a Bengali daily started in 1980-81, a daily with the difference in that he made it a vehicle for serving the cause of the people. He resigned later because one of his senior columnists (the well-known Hamdi Bey) was dismissed by the proprietors without his knowledge. The Ananda Bazar group was only waiting to welcome him-with respect; he continued to write for them until he fell ill. He honored with a number of awards, Maharashtra Government Award 1981, Hardayal Harmony Award 1993, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Award 1993, Ananda Bazar Award 1970, Bankim Award 1982. He, and another radical humanist, Santi Sen (who was very close to M.N. Roy) and Barun Sen Gupta-intellectuals and writers-were arrested during the 1975-77 emergency for their open defiance and criticism of the emergency. Unlike others they were fearless, they did not whisper, they were loud in their protests. Unlike many other intellectuals, they perceived the danger, the death of democracy and civil liberties and freedoms. Gour da was awarded the press foundation of Asia Award in 1978, and the Magsaysay Award in 1981 in recognition of this valiant defiance of authoritarianism and his fight for freedom of expression and civil liberties.

Anath Mitra

Anath Mitra (1918-1998) another devoted Royist from Calcutta contributed in spreading Humanist ideas of Roy in west Bengal. He worked as manager of RH when the paper was published, as a weekly from Calcutta during 1951-62. He was really disappointed when RH was taken over by the central office at Delhi but his loyalty to Roy’s ideas never diminished. He had a collection of all the old copies of Independent India in bound volumes and all the books and pamphlets written by Roy and he donated them to the Renaissance Publishers. He was the founder-chairman of the Jijnasa Education Society and actively helped in the publication of the journal “Jijnasa” edited by Prof Sibnarayan Ray.
M.V. Ramamurthy and Malladi Subamma

Among the radical Humanists from Andhra-pradesh, M.V. Ramamurthy (1918-1998) a lawyer by profession can perhaps be regarded as one of the most prominent radicals who worked in different capacities to carry on the movement in Andhra Pradesh since its inception. To begin with, he was an activist in the student movement of the communist party. In 1942 after graduation in arts and law, he joined RDP. He practiced as a lawyer from 1947 to 1973 when he gave up his lucrative practice to work for RHM as a full timer. He was also one among many radicals who were detained during emergency from June 1975 to April 1976 and was an active member of CFD. A strong believer in partyless democracy, he functioned as General Secretary of the IRHA from 1979-1981 and its president from 1983-86. Education for him was an important tool to spread humanistic and rationalist ideas so he wrote extensively both in English and Telugu. Between 1974-1989 he functioned as the editor of a Telugu monthly "Vikasam" meaning Development and has written several books in Telugu besides translating Roy’s “Beyond Communism” and “New Humanism”. Ramamurthy was a member of the Andhra University Senate and was a founder of an Educational society, which started a college at Bapatla. He was also actively involved in the Rationalist and civil liberties movements in the state. At the time of his death, he was the president of the Indian Rationalist Association, General secretary of the Andhra-Pradesh branch of the PUCL. Besides writing regularly in academic journals, dailies and magazines, he launched a movement for inter-caste and inter-religious marriages in the state and officiated several such marriages along with his wife and comrade Malladi Subbamma who is a leader in her own right in Andhra pradesh. She is a reputed Telugu writer and has been instrumental in establishing a number of women’s welfare societies and institutions and is still carrying on the task of educating and enlightening the women as a part of RHM.

Innaiah Nasiretti

Among the second generation of Humanists and Rationalists from Andhra Pradesh, Innaiah Nasiretti a Ph.d in philosophy from Osmania University can be regarded as the most important person who has been working relentlessly to keep the RHM alive in various capacities. A prolific writer, he has written over fifteen books in English on
subjects as diverse as Roy’s Radical Humanism, Roy’s, Evelyn and Ellen’s biography, politics of power, Tradition and Modernity and philosophical consequences of Modern Science. To have a wider appeal for radical humanist ideas he has also written extensively in Telugu. He is the author of about two dozen books in Telugu highlighting the need of Renaissance in a tradition bound country like India which is gripped by fraudulent, irrational and superstitious religious activities. For the purpose he has written on subjects such as Philosophical Ideas of Rammohan Roy, Karl Marx M.N.Roy, philosophy and common sense, Quest for Truth etc. In order to spread the message about corrupt politics and politicians in the country across party lines he has been writing on caste politics, Government and Politics in Andhra-pradesh and political parties in the state in the form of books and through Telugu dailies and periodicals.

Innaiah, presently working as Author and Freelance Journalist also has been contributing regularly to English magazines like American Atheist, Free Inquiry, Washline, American Rationalist, Indian Rationalist, Radical Humanist and Secularist. He has also contributed to the movement through Electronic media as he has produced documentaries and moderated discussions on Humanist-Rationalist themes through All India Radio, Doordarshan (T.V.), Hyderabad. He has also created a number of web sites on life of M.N.Roy. Important Humanist and Rationalist individuals and groups in the country. During his long association with RHM and Rationalist movement in India he has held many important positions. He was the co-editor of “Prasarita”-a Telugu quarterly in social sciences, President of A.P.chapter of Indian Academy Of Social Sciences, Hyderabad-1988-90, Secretary of IRHA, A.P., General Secretary IRA from 1994-96, and President of A.P.Rationalist Association. Presently he is Coordinator of FARA, A.P, Vice President of Rationalist Association of India, Chairman –committee to study child abuse, IIIEU and Editorial member –Encyclopedia of Un-belief. Thus by his varied activities Innaiah is actively working towards the goal of creating a society based on rationalist and humanistic values.

6.5. Field Experiences

In order to get a better understanding and deep insight into the functioning of RHM an attempt was made to carry out the study from a subjective point of view that is by taking in to account the actor’s (radical humanists) own views and field experiences
subjects as diverse as Roy’s Radical Humanism, Roy’s, Evelyn and Ellen’s biography, politics of power, Tradition and Modernity and philosophical consequences of Modern Science. To have a wider appeal for radical humanist ideas he has also written extensively in Telugu. He is the author of about two dozen books in Telugu highlighting the need of Renaissance in a tradition bound country like India which is gripped by fraudulent, irrational and superstitious religious activities. For the purpose he has written on subjects such as Philosophical Ideas of Rammohan Roy, Karl Marx, M.N. Roy, philosophy and common sense, Quest for Truth etc. In order to spread the message about corrupt politics and politicians in the country across party lines he has been writing on caste politics, Government and Politics in Andhra-pradesh and political parties in the state in the form of books and through Telugu dailies and periodicals.

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ushering in a society of their dreams. As the road from existing situation to the goal of creating a free society of free men is a very long one and is beyond the scope of all the existing human resources and institutional structures that radicals have created for the purpose, a pertinent question that has been raised from time to time by some active radicals themselves like Balraj Puri, Swadesh Ranjan Das, late Prof Yadava and many others has been: Should radicals fight the parties and other inimical forces both inside and outside the legislature whenever they get an opportunity to do so or should they allow other corrupt conservative parties with dictatorial and fascist tendencies having scant regard for individual growth, to reign over the people. Balraj Puri from Jammu points out that RHM’s campaign against party system has done a serious damage to the functioning of democracy in India. It’s failure to appreciate the urge for power and its role in socio-political life undermines its effectiveness in theory and practice of politics in the country. Similar views were often echoed by late Prof Yadava, who always believed, politics is an art of accomplishing the possible through a continuous exercise in dynamic existential life situations rather than through an exercise in logic in a vacuum. Therefore one has to learn to choose the lesser evil in day-to-day life on a pragmatic basis subject to the realistic requirements of the ideals, values and principles of radical humanist democracy. Pragmatic idealism in socio-cultural reconstruction work is indispensable, because utopian actions or premature revolutionary efforts lead to isolation of the utopian revolutionaries and eventually to a counter revolutionary backlash. The sentiment that all revolutionaries should utilise all existing democratic institutions for the radical, revolutionary, democratic work is shared by majority of radicals who have worked amongst people in their daily life situations. Even though almost 80% of radicals contacted were in favor of working in co-operation with like minded people, forums and different organizations, majority of them were found to be still very much against party polities which was advocated only by a miniscule minority.

As a result of their personal experience, a good number of radicals conceded that one major handicap of their movement has been that except during emergency, radicals have concerned themselves with philosophical doctrines without caring to relate their ideas to the crying needs of their time. As a result the postulates enunciated in 1948 were never tested against real empirical facts and radicals have chanted most of them like
mantras and have been completely alienated from the people. They themselves have realized that in a crisis ridden society like ours, a bunch of people clinging to their personal philosophy inherited more than half a century ago, will have no import and that in order to carve out some meaningful role for themselves in the present circumstances they need to bring about a radical change in their own attitudes and perspective. They have to respond to existential situations by choosing their own spheres of action and act consistently according to their long cherishes values. Activists among radicals like M.V.Ramamurthy, Subamma, Indumati parikh, Manoj Dutta, Balraj puri, Jawahire and others who worked at grassroots level in rural areas have emphasized from time to time the need to go to people, organize them with a view to build up lokshakti (people’s power) They firmly believe that there philosophy will achieve some relevance only when radicals shall be able to relate their ideology to the needs of the common people.

There is always some scope of work for the individual radicals depending on his/her personal traits, leadership qualities etc. He/she can act as a sincere friend, guide and philosopher to those with whom he interacts in everyday life on the dictum that example is better than precept. In fact for many years and to a large extent even in post associational phase of RIHM a majority of radicals continued to work as scattered individuals. They have realized that neither the single individual alone, nor even a large number of mutually unrelated and scattered revolutionaries can achieve much. They feel, the formation of IRHA was functional initially in the sense that it provided an organizational home for all activists, sympathizers and supporters of the movement by inculcating a sense of belonging among the alienated individuals. But at the concrete level it could never act as an effective instrument of coordinating the activities of the scattered individual radicals who were granted absolute freedom to carry out any task and this could not lead to any organized efforts for achievements of desired objectives of the movement, which is so vital for any movement. Mere formation and joining the organization will not automatically lead to attaining the desired results. What is important is that it should undertake organized activities with a sense of realism. It is only through active and regular participation in meaningful organized activities that the radicals can overcome their sense of alienation as merely spinning new ideas or delivering sermons though necessary is not a sufficient condition for it. So they have realized the necessity of
having an effective organization having the requisite number of whole time and part time leaders and active workers in different inter-related fields of dynamic human life. However the radicals strongly feel that it should not be the single multi-purpose omnibus organization. Its purpose and function should only be to act as the central nucleus of a radical-revolutionary movement of humanist democracy. Majority of the radicals believe RIHM to be a comprehensive movement emphasizing both the philosophical and political aspects. As no single organization can promote both the renaissance and political movement, they feel the members of the central organization should actively work through limited-purpose organizations according to their tastes and competence. In fact the number of such organizations can be as large as the number of actual short-term and long-term human goals or purposes. They can pertain to different spheres of life-cultural, social economic, political etc-and can exist at local, regional, national and even international levels.

Thus on the basis of their experiences over years the radicals have come to the conclusion that the massive task of qualitative socio-cultural transformation calls for education cum struggle strategy and it can be undertaken and accomplished only if they link themselves to masses at large, more particularly the more underprivileged sections among them. They have continuously to educate both themselves and the educators of the people thereby multiplying themselves and function as catalytic agents of their movement by properly organizing themselves and mobilizing the masses in different spheres of life through democratic education, propaganda, agitation and joint struggles with them in order to create a wide network of popular resistance blocks to various forms of existing undemocratic and inhuman structures at local, regional, national and even international level. This movement has to be effected or carried forward on the general social philosophy and values of radical humanist democracy and therefore makes decentralization in every sphere of life imperative more particularly in political field, so that there may be increasing personal contact between the elites and the masses. Primary emphasis should be on improvement in quality of human individuals at the grassroots, for any scheme of decentralization is likely to fail in its absence.

However, a small minority of radicals Anath mitra, Sitangshu chatterjee, Brahmam had reservations against working in conjunction with other organizations. They
viewed RHM as primarily a renaissance movement and felt that functioning as part of limited purpose organisations like CFD, PUCL or others would mean losing their identity and liquidating their long term goal of bringing about philosophical-cultural revolution no matter how utopian it appears to be. As RHM is primarily an ideological movement, rational and emotional loyalty to their basic radical humanist values is of vital importance to radicals and in their view nothing else may be allowed precedence over them. Therefore an important issue that calls for assessment is the extent to which radicals have been able to live their ideology. In other words it is important to examine the relationship between profession and practice of radical humanists.

6.6. Profession and Practice of Radical Humanists

The nature of RHM is such that it demands a high degree of personal integrity, individual thinking and moral values. The biggest crisis mankind is faced with is one of moral degeneration. Consequently there exists a dangerous gap between what leaders or elite preach and what they actually do in their work of life, that is the gap that exists between thought and action. In a society characterized by illiteracy, wide economic disparities, exploitation, opportunism, ignorance, the task of socio-cultural transformation can not be accomplished by corrupt politicians but as Roy believed it has to be undertaken by few public spirited, socially awakened elites whose integrity and character is still intact and who possess the courage of their convictions. A remarkable thing about Roy was his sense of purpose and courage of conviction. For him life and thought were inseparable. H.J.Blackham writes; If one looks round amongst declared humanist living today and takes the liberty of naming Bertrand Russell and Julian Huxley and Barbara Wootton and Jean Paul Sartre, and looks back at those recently dead and names Gilbert Murray and M.N.Roy and John Dewey, these are not merely the names of men of great gifts and achievements, they are the names of many sided human beings of more than ordinary candour and public spirit who have lived and spent themselves in human cause. You may find as many faults with them as you like, with their thinking, with their judgments, with their lives: they remain grand exemplars of what it means to be human, and to have one’s passions and ends and values illumined by humanist thinking.' (I.J.Blackham, ed., objections and Humanism p-28). Roy was not content that his followers should only preach morality. There have been, wrote Roy, innumerable
moralists from time immemorial. They have preached high ideals, which were never practiced in order to introduce morality in public life some people must begin with practicing the ideas they will preach. The modern world looks like a madhouse. Appeal to reason gets lost in the storm of emotions running wild. Preaching therefore is futile. But a group of men who would live rationally and morally will make miracles, and the example will become irresistible contagion. (Roy 1954: 274).

Roy was very unrealistic in his belief that, a few moral, rational, public spirited, socially awakened persons would accomplish the massive task of qualitative sociocultural transformation. His optimism is reflected when he says, 'Naturally when a hundred of them will be travelling on this path and be guided by the same ideal and will be engaged in the same practice, there will be cooperation among them. A humanist movement will develop among such groups of humanists. They will not pursue a distant ideal of a better society but they will create and constitute by themselves the epitome of the rational and ethical society that new humanism visualizes. (See M.N. Roy, Radical Humanist, 24 June 1956, p.294). Roy's optimism however is not borne by facts. In case of few individual radicals we can say that the dedication, selflessness with which they are engaged in carrying forward Roy's ideas even where they are in minority of one bears testimony to the fact that Roy was their friend, philosopher and guide in a sense in which only men of towering moral stature can be. These individual radicals are trying to live their philosophy in their day-to-day lives even though they are surrounded by counter revolutionary forces. But the number of such radicals is very small. So from this point of view the problem of gap between profession and practice of radical humanist is one of individual character. However, on the basis of empirical field work, the researcher definitely feels that the individual character of radical humanists as compared with others i.e. non radicals can be said to be better because whereas one often witnesses dangerous gaps today between the thoughts, speeches and actions of most of the elites in different walks of life, more particularly in case of political elite who have become adept in the art of selfishly exploiting the depressed, helpless, ignorable and gullible individuals and sections of our society at large one not only does not see such a trend among radicals, on the contrary these are the very issues which are at the centre of RIHM.
One important aspect of the gap between profession and practice of radicals is that this gap is inherent in the nature of the movement itself. If one takes the philosophy seriously then it implies a very high degree of moral behavior for its members, which in practice is difficult to achieve. Most of the radicals, this researcher interviewed, themselves conceded that in actual practice compromises have to be made every now and then. As a way of illustration one can point out that almost hundred percent of the radicals this researcher contacted professed to be atheists, but in actual practice, barring a few exceptions the religious ceremonies and rituals relating to birth, death marriage etc. are solemnly held in their houses just as in the families of non-radicals.

Roy could live his philosophy because he was far ahead of his times in his thinking. But for an ordinary radical it is very difficult to swim against the current, so the radicals associated with RHM have not been able to become the evangelists of their movement as was envisaged by Roy. And moreover his hope that by way of educating themselves and by being the educators of the people they will multiply themselves endlessly and function ceaselessly as the catalytic agents of comprehensive ‘radical humanist revolution’ remains a distant dream even to a small number of living radicals whose number has been shrinking rapidly. This brings us to the task of sociological assessment of the movement in terms of its limitations, viability and relevance in the present circumstances. As M.N. Roy and his ideas are at the center of the movement it will only be pertinent to discuss the relevance of his ideas in the existing world situation.

References


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