

## CHAPTER- IV

### THE CONCEPT OF HUMANISM

#### 0.4.1 Humanism; its meaning in a nutshell :

Humanism as a concept is difficult to define; and no single word or sentence can explain the varied meanings of Humanism. *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* has defined Humanism as follows: “ (1) a system of thought concerned with human rather than divine or supernatural matters. (2) an outlook emphasizing common human needs and concerned with humankind as responsible and progressive intellectual beings. (3) (often Humanism) literary culture, esp. that of the Renaissance Humanists.<sup>1</sup> In short, humanism is doing welfare to men; it is an outlook, or an ideology, which can make human life happier and peaceful. This outlook inspires men to go against the outdated traditional and old ideas, and encourages them to work for the welfare of the society with their creative attitudes and ideas. Humanism demands that human beings are not an animal alone, it is an animal with creative, social, cultural and intellectual ideas and thoughts. It is expected that all ideas of men be directed towards rational thinking, justice and compassion to others. In essence the sacred ethics of humanism is liberty, humanity, tolerance and self-dignity. It involves equality for all irrespective of men’s caste, sex, religion or classes. In this regard Corliss Lamont in his “*The Philosophy of Humanism*” says: “It is a philosophy of Joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and according to the methods of reason and democracy”<sup>2</sup> It is certain that even though differences on the grounds of geography, religion, language, and politics have brought about the

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<sup>1</sup> Kindersley, Dorling. (2008). *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*. p. 397

<sup>2</sup> Q.V. Bora, Mahim. (1989). *Cinta- Bicittra*. p.208

differences among men, in actuality there remains no difference in their human trait. At least all men desire to be in peace and prosperity and security.

#### **0.4.2 Movement of Renaissance in Europe :**

As a matter of ideology the idea of humanism is quite old. Love towards human beings, compassion, welfare and progress, human dignity and value are all very old ideas associated with human beings. Humanism as an organized is new but it is the product of many millennia of human growth and development. It helped to make man to realise his potential powers and gifts. Humanism promotes a ethical life. A. S. Hornby opines Humanism as: “a system of thought that considers that solving human problems with the help of reason is more important than religious beliefs. It emphasizes the fact that the basic nature of human beings is good.”<sup>3</sup> However it was only during the great Renaissance Movement in Europe that these came to form a compact ideology. Renaissance was an intellectual movement to fight against authoritarianism and supernaturalism. Even though Jesus Christ preached universal brotherhood, in the medieval age it was the general belief of men that men could be relieved of their sorrows and pain only by going to the church. Before Renaissance the European society was formed mainly with the peasants, army men and the priests. Ignorant as they were, the agents of the Pope took advantage of that; and superstitions gloomed that society.<sup>4</sup>

#### **0.4.3 Influence of Renaissance :**

The Renaissance had serious impact in Europe by bringing new waves of knowledge. Men now began to search for new ideas and thoughts. In fact, Renaissance had immense impacts upon literature, culture and philosophy. The society in Europe heaved a sigh of relief. The earlier authoritarianism gave way to new ideas

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<sup>3</sup> Hornby, A.S.(2002 ). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. p.635

<sup>4</sup> Bali, D.R.(1989). *Introduction to philosophy*. p. 236

of human equality, fraternity and brotherhood. It also brought much change to the social institutions by bringing modernity to the society. Common men now onwards found enough resources in their own ability which ultimately brought them confidence and strength of mind. They now came to realise that all culture and literature are created for the good of men. It was in this period of the Renaissance that there was demand for the liberty of speech. On all this count Renaissance is treated as the great age of thought and ideas.

#### **0.4.4 Philosophical view point of Humanism :**

Humanism has its philosophical side as well. Human life is the source of all its ideas and acts; and it is the only scale of measurement of all values. Humanism unifies society and gives it a colour of humanity. It directs society to act for the solution of its problems. It rejects supernaturalism and directs men to go to the real path of human service. One can be a universal personality by following these principles of humanity. Indeed Humanism is not a religion, it is a philosophy. In this regard Sarvapallī Rādhākriṣṇaṇ remarks as follows: “Humanism is a legitimate protest against those forms of religion which separate, secular and sacred, divide time and eternity and breakup the unity of the soul and flesh.”<sup>5</sup>

#### **0.4.5 Development of Humanism :**

History of humanism is a long one and is not simple. Beginning with Italy in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century it gradually spread over the countries throughout Europe.<sup>6</sup> The term ‘humanism’ was normally used to apply in the field of literature and culture till about the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> In the 16<sup>th</sup> century those who studied grammar, rhythm (Canda), history, poetry and philosophy/moral sciences were treated as humanists and

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<sup>5</sup> Q.V. Ibid. p. 236

<sup>6</sup> Kataki, Prafulla. (2005). *Sāhitya-Sajñā koṣ*. p. 202

<sup>7</sup> Bali, D.R.(1989). *Introduction to philosophy* . p. 327

these subjects were treated as ‘humanities.’ Because these subjects led to the development of morality and creative imagination. During that time studies of those subjects focussed mainly on the classical Roman culture. They all emphasised upon the writing of Latin, especially the Roman literature and its speaking. Humanists of the time tried to discover and edit the original texts of Greek and Latin and forwarded their interpretations on them. Thus these humanists immensely contributed towards the growth of the ideas and ideology of Renaissance. These humanists offered their interpretations based mainly on the works of the Philosophers like Aristotle, Plato and Cicero.<sup>8</sup> During the Elizabethan age this movement became popular in England. Humanism led to the development of commercial pursuits, political liberty and intellectual activities. People in Europe now demanded that governments in Europe be handled by the people and the Pope must bestow his authorities upon the people. As a result of this movement the religious Reformation Movement started in Europe.

#### **0.4.6 Influence of Pythagoras :**

The philosophy of humanism expressed itself fully in Pythagoras. His dictum that ‘man is the measure of all things’ deeply influenced the humanists. During this period Socrates ‘idea of humanism too had immense influence upon the society. Since then 16<sup>th</sup> century till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century humanism had deep influence in European society. The result was the gradual decline of the concept of fragmented statehood towards a nation state.

#### **0.4.7: Impact of Modernism :**

The advent of the modernism had deep impact on the life and culture of men. Science and philosophy took significant trends towards humanism. Francis Bacon and

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<sup>8</sup> Abrams, M.H. & Harpham, G.G. (2015). *Glossary of Literary Terms*. p.163

Descartes superseded the boundary of old model of thoughts and developed newer trends in philosophical thoughts. They supplied ideas for the welfare of humanity and solutions of problems on the ground of their newer interpretation of facts and logical reasoning. During that time the natural scientists too had immense impacts upon the society by their discoveries. They forwarded newer reasoning to understand the older superstitious beliefs and customs. Philosophers like Baruch Spinoza interpreted man as a part of the nature and is the exposition of God. One cannot question and involve in debate if the God does not love him even when he loves God in turn.<sup>9</sup> J. J. Rousseau even started a movement for the reorientation and revaluation of the education system. Through his work '*Emile*' Rousseau proposed for popular education and said: "We are born sensible, and from our birth we are affected in different ways by the objects which surround us."<sup>10</sup> His theory of Social Contract acted as magic during this period.

#### **0.4.8 Impact of Science and Technology :**

The sense of human progress occupied a major space in the thoughts of men during the four hundred years from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During this period the sole objective of many intellectuals was the development of society and humanity on the basis of the applications of new discoveries of sciences and technology. For, the discoveries of sciences had inspired them to think for the good of the society through their use and application. The result was as expected: developments in almost all aspects of men's material life became soon apparent. The amount of development achieved during the last two centuries was so immense that it could not be compared with what had been achieved in the many previous centuries. At the same time, the

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<sup>9</sup> Sarma, Sibanath & Barua Girish. (2011) "*Śaṅkaradeva and Spinoza*". *Śrīmanta Śaṅkaradeva and His philosophy*. pp. 242- 243

<sup>10</sup> Rousseau, J. J. & Payne, W. H. (2003). *Émile*. p. 4

popular Governments proposed to give equal right to all in the field of education. That too helped in the progress of humanity. In the practical field now man became the sole subject of concern. In the field of religion superrealism and superstition began to say goodbye. Now onwards worship of humanity replaced the worship of God. Thus the last two decades became a hall-mark in the course of the development of humanism.

#### **0.4.9 Category of Humanism :**

As a specific ideology humanism has attracted the attention of scientists and philosophers from time to time. They have begun to analyse humanism from various angles, and have categorized them into different categories; and have also named them differently. These categories are discussed below:

##### **0.4.9 (i) Naturalistic Humanism :**

Among the different branches of humanism the Naturalistic Humanism is one. Also known as Scientific Humanism it has tremendous impact upon men's ideas and got popularity throughout the world. This branch of humanism is so intrinsically related to the nature that it is also called Applied Naturalism. In actuality, it has established that man can create his own fortune by rejecting supernaturalism and magic. They do not accept the existence of God and religion. According to Corliss Lamont, one of the chief spokespersons of this branch of humanism in the US - "The Humanist philosophy persistently strives to remind men that their only home is in the mundane world. There is no use of searching elsewhere for happiness and fulfilment, for there is no place else to go. We human beings must find our destiny and our praised land in the here and now, or not at all. And humanism is interested in a future life, not in the sense of some fabulous paradise in the skies, but as the on going

enjoyment of earthly existence by generation after generation through eternities of time.”<sup>11</sup>

#### **0.4.9 (ii) Realistic Humanism :**

One of the divisions of humanism is Realistic Humanism. Bertrand Russel and R.N. Sellers are the two main advocates of this branch of humanism. These humanists argue in favour of transmitting humanist ideology into institutionalism. Bertrand Russel advocates truth and beauty as the key to perfection of life. He believes that only truth and a sense of beauty can plant the seed of humanism in man. He also desires unity of all social organizations to achieve the welfare of humanity. According to R N Seller, for all creative works the earth is the most convenient space where men can work for their own good. Both of them argue that man should avoid thinking of aspects like God, sinfulness or piousness, salvation, heaven, the other world etc.

#### **0.4.9 (iii) : Liberal Humanism :**

A section of the humanists think that liberalism can bring peace and prosperity to the society. Their idea is named as Liberal Humanism. They do not believe in domination. According to them, secularism is the only way to progress. To them all men are at liberty by birth, and they have their own self-dignity. So they believe that liberty and self-dignity can establish humanity in the society. They propose for liberal education for the growth of complete man. One of the major drawbacks of this humanism however is that it keeps aside the question of the misfortune of the marginalized class.

#### **0.4.9 (iv) Existentialism :**

Existentialism is also a brand of humanism. This brand emerged during the Second World War. Jean Paul Sartre has established it as a form of humanism.

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<sup>11</sup> Lamont, Corliss. (1959). *Humanism as a philosophy*. p.21

Besides, Nietzsche and Albeyar kemu were two other atheist philosophers who are the exponents of this branch of humanism. Of course even before them Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marshall also contributed towards that end. To all of them mere living like animals does not mean living like human being. According to them, man is not a part of the all but they are all separate individuals.<sup>12</sup> The identity of an individual depends largely on his own conscience and decision. They act according to their own will. They emphasise upon men's emotion rather than upon reason, intellect, tradition and rituals (sanskars). It is to be noted that existentialism is not a mere philosophy, but an applied philosophy. They assert that a man can live in peace and happiness by acting upon one's own self.

#### **0.4.9 (v) Marxist Humanism :**

Karl Marx and his followers also are humanists. They propose to establish humanism through class struggle and revolution. They propose to change the life of man especially the economic life of man through revolution. They try to liberate the oppressed and the exploited class of people by revolution. To them if the economic structure could be changed, humanism would be established. They also do not put their trust on the democratic system. Since this form of humanism is mainly based on the presumption of economic change, many would not support their view.

#### **0.4.9 (vi) Religious Humanism :**

There is still another humanism called religious humanism which influences the humanists. In spite of the association of the term religion, here there is no space for undue belief and superstition. In a sense it is one of the major parts of the Scientific or Naturalistic Humanism. The believers on this humanism reject the ideas

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<sup>12</sup> Saikia, Nagen. (2012). *Sāhitya- Bāda Baicitrya*. pp.67-72



of sinfulness, vulgarity, etc. They also reject the idea of belief on God. This form of humanism is highly popular in the US.

**0.4.9 (vii) Revolutionary Humanism :** Another form of humanism is Revolutionary Humanism. The chief exponent of this form of humanism is Julian Huxley. His concept of humanism is established on the concept of Darwinian concept of evolution. According to this humanism the world is subject to a process of evolution; and man is the sole agent of this evolution. Therefore the whole process of evolution depends on man. Every generation has the need of a special kind of religion. According to Huxley, this religion must be progressive and changing, and adjustable to the contexts and historical situations. At the same time, it should also be without revelation although the truth of religion needs not be like that of the scientific truth. This humanism believes on *Advaitavada* as it contends that the human mind and body are not separate. Both mind and body impacts each other.

According to Huxley, the major problem of the present time is the population explosion. It is because of this population explosion that people of the world have to remain half-fed, illiterate, and suffer from health problem and diseases. To him, man cannot live by the thought of food and cloth alone. He thinks that art, science and religion which can be used as substitutes of material life are all necessary for living. Art improves quality of life. Noting the applied side of art Huxley writes: “In the fulfilment society envisaged by humanism, art would be assigned a large role to beauty the public sector, to bear witness to the richness of existence, to affirm values in concrete effective form, to provide achievements in which human society can find itself more adequately.”<sup>13</sup> Huxley does not find any difference between religion and science. Science influences man both internally and externally, directs him and

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<sup>13</sup> Huxley, Julian. (1964). *Essay of a Humanist*. p.58

controls him. Science is necessary for eradication of both superstition and fearfulness. It can even help religion. In regard to his form of humanism Huxley thinks: "In the light of the evolutionary humanism, fulfilment and enrichment of life are seen as the overriding aims of existence, to be achieved by the realization of life's inherent possibilities. Thus the development of man's vast potential of realizable possibility provides the prime motive for collective action the only motive in which all men or nations could agree, the only basis for transcending conflicting ideologies. It makes it possible to heat the splits between religion and science and art by enlisting man's religious and scientific and artistic capacities in a new common enterprise. It prescribes an agenda for the world's discussions of that enterprise and suggest the practical methods to be employed in running."<sup>14</sup> In short Huxley's Evolutionary Humanism is a form of Scientific Humanism.

#### **0.4.10 Humanism in Eastern countries :**

##### **(i) China :**

Besides the humanist of the West, there are also few other humanists in the East who have immensely contributed towards the idea of humanism. The name of China comes first in this regard. One of the major humanists of China was Confucius. He tried his best all through his life to establish good relationship among men. He believed that man is the superior-most animal among all the creatures of the world. The belief that truth makes man great was reversely treated by Confucius who thought that it is man who makes the truth great. In this regard Confucius interpretation is "It is man that makes truth great but not truth that makes man great".<sup>15</sup> During the time of Confucius religion was highly esteemed in China. He created such a belief among men that man by his own act can even control the nature. In China philosophers did

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<sup>14</sup> ibid, p.113

<sup>15</sup> Chan, Wing- tist. (1960). *The Concept of Man* . p.158

not reject the idea of God. One of the best-known Chinese humanists was Wing-tist Chan who believes that sense of humanism has greatly influenced the minds of man. To him, “If one word could characterise the entire history of Chinese philosophy, the word would be humanism ...”<sup>16</sup>

**(ii) India :**

In India too germ of humanism has been felt since long past. Even though the subject of humanism is a major part of Western philosophy, this has been reflected in the literature, religion, philosophy, and culture of India since ancient past. The sense of humanism is primarily related to the religious thoughts in India where the supreme position is given to the Paramesvara in opposition to what the Western humanists put on the importance of man. Indian humanists put emphasis on both God and man. As a result, here in India humanists speak of the welfare of all living creatures in the line of the *Vedantic* philosophy. To them therefore humanism and humanity are not two different things. Their aim is to create a good world by bringing welfare to all- poor, oppressed, exploited, conscious and unconscious (*cit* and *acit*), and all others.

All Ideologists regard the *Ṛg Veda* as the oldest literary work of the world. No other specimen of literature in the Indo-European language group as old as the *Ṛg Veda* has still been discovered. In the *Ṛg Veda* traces of humanism is found. In one of its verses the *Ṛg Veda* invites all to work unitedly for the good of the society. It says: “*saṅgaccadhvñ saṅbadadhvñ sañ vo manāñsi jānatām.*”<sup>17</sup> (sañ-10, sūkta-192) This means that all men are to be friendly in their behaviour to one another, all are to speak together, and learn together. This is a good example of humanism.

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<sup>16</sup> Chan, Wing- tist. (1963). *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy.* p.3

<sup>17</sup> Q. V. Das, Kailash & Bora, Kamala Kanta (1998). ‘*Bhāgavata Bāñī*’ *Vaiṣṇav Paṇḍit Sonārām Chutiā Racanāvalī*. p.712

In Indian tradition the *Mahabharata* is treated as *Itihāsa* and *Purāṇa* (the great epic). This epic is not only concerned with men's religious life, it is also concerned with human welfare, non-violence, truth and other forms of human values. It is therefore called as the Fifth *Veda*. It is therefore the epitome of early Indian culture, civilization and social ideology. By asserting the superiority of humanity Yudhiṣṭhira is stated in *Śānti parva of Mahābhārta* to have asserted that there is no other than man which is superior. He said : *na mānuṣāt śreṣṭhataram hi kiñcit*.<sup>18</sup> Through such statement of yudhiṣṭhira the body of the human being is not appreciated but his personality and mainly relationship to the Supreme being.

One of the most sacred scriptures of Hinduism is the *Śrīmadbhagavad-Gītā*. All irrespective of religious faith see the *Gītā* with reverence. Although the *Gītā* is a part of the *Māhabhārata*, it is complete by itself and an independent scripture. It exclaims the idea of its humanism as follows:

*vidyāvinayasampanne brāhmaṇe gabi hastini /*

*Śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinah ||*<sup>19</sup>

i.e one who is the possessor of *vidyā* (learning / knowledge) and *vinaya* (humility) will treat all as equal, be he a Brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog or a *Caṇḍāla* (aboriginal tribe).

The *Upanisads* speak of the superiority of human beings. The mantra of the *Upanisad* is : *pure śhann aparāṇ kiñcit*- ( there is no one superior to man). It further says : *ātmaānaṁ viddhi*<sup>20</sup> ( know thyself).

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* too equality of men is declared. It is known as the last work of Vyāsadeva. Here we find the appreciation of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Daivakī; but at

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<sup>18</sup> Q.V. Goswami, Asok Kumar. (2011). *Sāhitya Cintā Caturdaśī* . p.45

<sup>19</sup> Brahmachari, Svami-Kṛṣṇananda. (1997). *Śrīmadbhagavad Gītā* p.174

<sup>20</sup> Q.V. Das, Kailash & Bora, Kamala Kanta. (1998). '*Bhāgavata Bāṇī*' *Vaiṣṇav Paṇḍit Sonārām Chutiā Racanāvalī* . p. 682

the same time gives importance to the *niṣkāma Bhakti* or detached devotion. Here we find indication of humanism as follows:

*Visrjya smayamānān svān dṛśaṇ brīdāñca daihikim |*

*Praṇamed daṇḍavad bhumāvāśva Cāṇḍālagokharam||*<sup>21</sup>

(Śrīmadbhāgavad, II/29/16).

(Let your kinsmen laugh at you if they so like, do not attend to them; do not distinguish between small and the big, salute all irrespective of their status; even the cows, dogs and *Cāṇḍālas* be respected and saluted.)

Gautam Buddha was another spokesman of humanity. He left all the pleasures and grandeurs of his palace as a prince, and devoted his entire energy for the good of the humanity. Buddha did not engage in the thought of the God as much as he did for the good of man. Sense of identifying one with the other, a sense of being one with them, and the noble ideas formed the basic principles of his thought. To him life is full of sorrow. So, he developed eight fold path of curing from the pain.<sup>22</sup> The eight fold path of Buddhism is (i) right faith (ii) right resolve (iii) right speech (iv) right action (v) right living (vi) right effort (vii) right thought and (viii) right concentration.<sup>23</sup> Commenting on Buddhism Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan wrote: “Buddhism has left a permanent mark on the culture of India. Its Hindu faith has absorbed the best of its ethics. A new respect for life, Kindness of animals, a sense of responsibility and an endeavour after higher life are brought home to the Indian mind with a renewed force.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Goswami, Malini. (2012). *Śrīmadbhāgavata purāṇam*. p.1378

<sup>22</sup> Saikia, Nagen. (2015). *Dimbeśwar Neog Racanāvalī*. PP.475-476

<sup>23</sup> Sharma, Chandradhar. (1976). *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*. p. 72

<sup>24</sup> Sarvapalli, Radhakrishnan. (1989). *Indian Philosophy*. Vol-I pp. 522-523

<sup>25</sup> Q.V. Bora, Mahim. (2009). *Cintā-Bicitrā*. p. 208

#### 0.4.11 Ideology of Humanism of the preceptor of *Bhakti* Movement :

The preceptors of the *Bhakti* Movement in medieval times spread the ideology of humanism all over India. On the basis of the ideology of the *Ālvārs* of the Tāmil South Rāmānuja emphasised on the equality of men in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In Mahārāṣṭra there were Jñāneswar, Namdeva, Eknath and Tukaram who wrote devotional songs asserting equality of all. Kabīr and Guru Nanak in North India were more liberal than any of the *Bhakti* saints. They attacked inequality among men on the basis of caste. There were many others among whom mention may be made of Dadu Dayal, Narsi Mehtā, Caitanya and Śaṅkaradeva and Madhavadeva in Assam. The latter developed his idea of equality of men irrespective of caste, creed and gender, while his disciple Madhavadeva proceeded a step further in this regard. In the line of the humanists of India one may also place poet sahajiyēi Candidas, according to whom, man is the only truth ; there would be no further truth than man. He says:

*Śunaha mānuṣ bhāi*  
*sabār opare mānuṣ satya*  
*tāhār opare nāi*<sup>25</sup>

#### 0.4.12 Views of modern Indian thinkers on Humanism :

In modern times many humanists in India have spoken about humanism. The most well-known of them all is Mohandās Karamchānd Gāndhī, shortly, Mahātmā Gāndhī. He struggled throughout his life for humanity and human dignity. He said: “ If need be somebody may cut me into pieces, still I cannot avoid my company of the Dalita.”<sup>26</sup> Gandhi treated all religions as equal and no different. In the year 1942 the American writer Luis Fisher came to India for a month when he was the guest of

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26. Hazarika, Tilak. (1994) *Hindu Dharma Ki*. p. 9

27 Bora, Rupa. (2010). *Mahātmā Gāndhīr Jīvan Kathā*. p. 133

28 Navavane, V. S. (1964) *Modern Indian Thought*. p. 113

Gandhi. He noticed a photo of Jesus Christ hung on the wall of Gandhi's residence where it was written: 'this is my peace'. Impressed by this writing Fisher asked Gandhi about his idea behind this line. Gandhi simply replied that he was a Christian, a Muslim, a Jew and at the same time, a Hindu.<sup>27</sup> This was the example of Gandhi's humanism. Gandhi brought freedom to India through the method of non-violence. His humanism was founded upon the base of morality. V.S. Naravane has commented that "... Gandhi's humanism had a moral social basis ...".<sup>28</sup> After all, Gandhi advocated equality of man.

Rājā Rām Mohan Ray was another humanist of modern India. He tried to fight superstitions through social and religious reforms. To him service to men was the service to God (the best service). He was in favour of a universal religion which is to be governed by love compassion.

Among the best builders of modern India was Paṇḍit Jawaharlāl Nehru, the former and the first Prime Minister of India. He was the spokesman of the marginalized class; he fought for a socialist society, and he never encouraged terrorism. His aim was to establish a socialist-democracy. So, the main point of his humanism was socialism. In this regard one of his critics has stated as follows: "The characteristic feature of Nehru's humanism is his faith in the dignity of the man."<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Nehru was also one of the major personalities of the freedom movement of India. As the Prime Minister also he achieved much advance for the country. His objective in this regard was to create a welfare state in India, to reduce poverty, and to develop science and scientific research in India. On his death in 1964 therefore Atal Vihārī Bājpāyī, the former Prime Minister of India, has commented as

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<sup>29</sup> Patnaik, Tandra. (1990). *Nehru's Concept of Scientific Humanism* . P. 35

<sup>30</sup> Gohain, Hiren. (1964). *Jawaharlal Neherur Avadān, Āmār Āsom*. PP. 1, 8

follows: *Bhāratmāta āji śokat ācanna –teñor priya rājñovarak teño heruvāice | āji mānavatā biṣāḍgrasta – tār pūjārīr dehāvasān ghaṭice śānti āji ātur – tār rakṣak āru nāi Nipīditajane āji heruvāle teñor āśrai Sādhāraṇ mānuhar cakur jyoti herāi gaice*<sup>30</sup> (India, today is concealed in sorrow as her beloved prince is lost. Today, humanity is in a cheerless state since her worshiper is no more. The peace of mind is distressed – her protector is no more. The crushed people today has lost her shelter. The common people have lost their splendour of eye.)

Modern India finds in Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan one of the best humanists of the country. His humanism is founded on the idea of supernaturalism (*atīndriyavād*) and philosophical spiritualism. To him philosophy is not the matter of luxury alone. He said: “each human individual has in him his boundless possibility which you call God; he has in him the divine nature.”<sup>31</sup>

Rabindranath Thakur was a another great humanist of modern India. His humanism is founded upon the idea of spiritual realization and meditation (*sādhana*). To him, if anyone pushes another person away from him, that means that he is also pushing God away from him.<sup>32</sup> His Sense of deep humanism is reflected in his poetry as follows :

*marite cāhinā āmi sundar Bhuvane  
Mānaber mājhe āmi bañciber cāi*<sup>33</sup>

(I don't want to die in the beautiful word, I want to live among the people)  
Commenting on his humanism V.S. Navavāne wrote: Tagore was a coloured by his aesthetic mystical experience...”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Q.V. Kailash, Das & Kamala Kanta Bora. (1998). ‘Śāstrara Uttama Gītā Bhāgavata’ Vaiṣṇava Paṇḍit Sonārām Chutiā Rachanāvalī. P.724

<sup>32</sup> Thakur, R. (2010). *Gītānjali*. P. 122

<sup>33</sup> Thakur, R. (2008). *Saṅcāitā*. p. 35

<sup>34</sup> Naravane, V.S. (1964). *Modern Indian Thought*. P.113



#### **0.4.13 Viwes of other modern Indian thinkers on humanism :**

M.N.Roy is another towering personality of modern Indian humanism. As an alternative to socialism Roy's humanism is founded on the idea of democratic revolution to be termed as radical or scientific humanism. He argued that for the peace and development of the society all politicians, social organizations, economic organizations, teachers and employees must join hands together. To him life is neither a mysticism nor unreal. With its intellect man's only objective is to think. This material world according to him is not a mere illusion. So, man too is not the creation of an unseen God or force. It is simply the evolution of the earlier generation of human beings. M.N.Roy wrote: "having no other reason than the origin of a new biological species."<sup>35</sup>

B. R. Ambedkar was one of the most outstanding humanists of modern India. His fight for the downtrodden and the depressed has been duly noted and recorded in the provisions of the Indian Constitution. B.R. Ambedkar wanted to annihilate the caste system from the society. He opined the demerits of the caste system of the society as follows : "The effect of caste on the ethics of the Hindus is simply deplorable. Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu's Public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste - ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for no response. There is charity but it begins with the caste and ends with the caste. There is sympathy but not for men of other caste."<sup>36</sup> Other such humanists include A. P. J. Abdul Kālam, Jayprakāsh Nārāyanṇ and others of modern India.

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<sup>35</sup> Roy, M.N. (1947). *The New Humanism*. p.1

<sup>36</sup> Ambedkar, B.R. (2008). *Annihilation of Caste*. pp.29-30

#### 0.4.14 Views of modern Assamese thinkers on Humanism :

Besides the other region of India, in Assam also, some remarkable humanists are mentionable. Of them, the pioneer poet of Romantic age of Assamese Literature, Chandra Kumār Agarwalla who was considered as a Humanist. Chandra Kumar Agarwalla who considered man as the only thing of worship as God. According to him:

*mānuhei dev mānuhei sev  
Mānuh bine nāi kev,  
Karā karā pūjā pādya arghya lai  
Jay jay mānav dev*<sup>37</sup>

(man is only God , there is nothing God without man , so, worship man like God.)

Interesting aspect of his humananistic thought is that although there is a strong sense of revolutionary humanism, his ideas finally merged with spiritualism.<sup>38</sup>

Bhupen Hazarika is also one of the remarkable humanists of modern Assam as well as India. Almost all his songs carry a strong sense of service to humanity. His songs are replete with ideas of doing welfare to the depressed, the exploited and the marginalized. To him, if man does not think for man, who else will come forward to do for him? He expresses this sense in a very nice and simple language in this way :

*mānuhe mānuhar bābe  
yadihe akano nābhābe  
akani sahānubhūtire  
bhābiba koneno koñvā, samanīyā?*<sup>39</sup>

Bhupen Hazarika wrote the above mentioned song during the period of 1960 – 61 which was the time of agitation for language in Assam.

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37 Hazarika, Atul Ch. (1967). *Chandrāmṛita*. p. 37

#### **0.4.15 The concept of New –Humanism :**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century there grew a new form of humanism called New-Humanism in the United States of America. It emphasizes upon liberal and moral humanism against Scientific Humanism. Humanity is the main concern of this kind of humanism where development of man is treated as the key to the development of the society. Education of all is the key to development of the society. The humanists of this school do not believe in an unseen God. Their main concern is humanity than religion.

However, Humanism has taken its different manifestation in different countries, in different times, and in the ideas of different humanists since it developed in Italy in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. However the major emphasis of all these differing humanists is love of humanity and its development and welfare.