

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2016 · 10 marks

Critically examine the Radical Humanist perspective on Indian National Movement.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 New Humanism → the individual is the end, society only the means

→ test = rational + ethical freedom, not independence alone

R2 Roy judges the movement incomplete → political independence ≠ real freedom → yardstick of reason, ethics, individual liberty

Body flow

individual-centred premise → collectivist nationalism suppresses liberty

→ Congress / **Gandhi**: emotional, religious, traditionalist mobilization, no rational-ethical awakening → distrust of parliamentary democracy / power-seeking parties → alternative: party-less, decentralized people's committees + compulsory education + purification of politics

Counter-view

Kaviraj: daring radicalism but a tragic loss of self-rule → party-less democracy impractical in a mass society → underestimates collective identities → presumes prior civic education

Conclusion routes

R1 freedom is more than a transfer of power → reason, ethics, individual liberty as its true content

R2 penetrating standard, impractical means → value lies in the yardstick, not the blueprint

The Radical Humanist reading of the freedom struggle grows from M.N. Roy's New Humanism. It places the individual at the centre: the individual is an end, society only a means. Roy found the National Movement incomplete, since political independence alone could not secure rational & ethical freedom.

Roy argued that collectivist nationalism suppressed individual liberty. The congress and Mahatma Gandhi leaned on emotional, religious and traditionalist mobilization. They ignored rational and ethical awakening real freedom needed. He distrusted parliamentary democracy as breeding power-seeking parties.

He proposed a party-less, decentralized democracy of people's committees, with compulsory education and the purification of politics.

According to Suddipto Kaviraj, this reconceptualization was astonishingly radical however tragically unable to secure the self-rule it sought.

Party-less democracy is hard in a mass society. It underestimates collective identities and presumes wide civic education before any restructuring. However, it reminds us that real freedom means more than a transfer of power.