**Guddu’s Free Political Science Classes**

**1st Lecture:**

**MN Roy's Main thoughts**

1. **Evolution in his thinking and different stages**
2. **Concept of Radical Humanism**

**How to best utilize the material:**

Most important aspect about the subject is to keep an open mind .The beauty of the subject is that there are no boundaries; we mandatorily need to take an interdisciplinary approach. Most of the teachings are quite visible in day to day activities, Newspaper readings etc.

Thus I would try to link with multiple aspects which I can think of while not letting the scholarly aspects get lost, further you can add/subtract/modify as per your own will. What you should not do is blindly follow anything and neither get into frivolous criticism just for the sake of it.

**For this lecture I would try to keep the 'name throwing' regarding the works of Roy, other thinkers to a minimum, would start to include them in subsequent lectures**

**Prerequisites :**

1. Have a basic knowledge of the Indian National Movement and International relations(Broadly for eg. Formation of Communist Party of India , Communist International , Major actors on the international /National scene like Gandhi, Lenin , Marx etc.)
2. General Terminology of Political science ( Like discourse, hegemony etc. ) --> {Can take a separate lecture on these if need be}

**Okay, let’s get down to business;**

Main questions that we are going to touch today to understand Roy are who is MN Roy? What are his most significant thoughts and what makes him special? What were the circumstances which conditioned Roy's thought and what is the evolution of his thought? Does he stand water against major thinkers like Gandhi or Marx?

MN Roy is considered India's one of the best philosophers and thinkers. The Chap provided relatively rare fresh thought to the subject. He was able to follow the international ideological trends while at same time impacted the discourse in Indian National Movement. The thought of MN Roy can be categorized into different parts:

1. **As a Revolutionary terrorist** : Roy started participating in the National movement as a revolutionary terrorist, believing that only armed struggle and physical expulsion of the british is the only way for freedom. His thought was during this time regarded freedom as political freedom from imperial masters. Do note that during this phase (late 1900's to early 1910's) , the socialistic traditions were neither strong in the country nor much synergy between the international and national movements. Roy like other RT's wanted to bring huge amounts of arms/ammunitions for the 'revolution' in the country.

1. **As Marxist**: In continuation of the RT phase, Roy went abroad in order to get ammunition and arms. During this phase , he came into contact Marxist works. His primary motive in studying Marx was to find shortcoming in Marxist thought.(Just like many of us who pick up a fight on Facebook when confronted with a different world view. We read a post only to be able to highlight the shortfalls in it :P) However it so happened that Mr Roy found the thoughts of Marx as perfectly rational. The class basis of the society as given by Marx made perfect sense to Roy. He even went ahead and established the Communist Party of India. He became an authority and an ideologue on Marxian thought. He was elected to the Communist International during the time of Lenin. There was a debate between him and Lenin regarding supporting National movements of different countries. While Lenin supported the view of giving support to movements in colonies irrespective of the ideology concerned and later on support communist revolution once imperialism was thrown. However Roy took it as an insult to Marx, he did want anyone to meddle/manipulate Marx's idea ( Marx had given the concept of 'international proletarianism'). During this phase he was quite critical of Gandhi and congress in general. He regarded congress as a bourgeoisie party and considered that India is ready for communist revolution ( He along with Abani Mukherjee even produced a text 'India in transition' to showcase with facts and figures that revolution like that of Russian revolution can take place in India)
2. **As a Congressman/Early start of Radical thinking**: He was removed from Comintern after his spat with Lenin. He joined Congress as a result and trying to radicalize it from within. His followers called Royist tried to form Radical League of congressmen as a faction of the INC. During this phase he was critically analyzing the Marxist thoughts, was sympathetic to Gandhian methods and trying to bring forth a synthesis of Gandhian, Marxist and his own thinking.
3. **As a Radical Humanist:** During the mid 1940's(1946 to be exact) Roy started a new political party . In the inaugral session, he brought forward the shortcomings of various school of thoughts i.e. Gandhian , Marxist, Parliamentary democracy etc. He then provided with the ideology of Radical Humanism however during the course of explanation he realized that party based struggle is not in conformity with the idea of Radical Humanism thus he disbanded the party and started a renaissance movement.

**Radical Humanism**

The concept of Radical Humanism is difficult to explain but easier to understand . It is the most important idea of MN Roy and is one of the few additions to the subject.

The concept of Radical Humanism is primarily influenced by the concept of existentialism (of Jeremy Bentham) and materialism. Roy consider Materialism i.e. quest for material things in life for not just keeping body and soul together but to achieve luxury as well. The idea focus on liberation of man , Roy consider Man devoid of all the artificial identities and only consisting of flesh and bones. He does not believe in the artificial identities of Nation, Class etc. rather is cosmopolitan in nature and refers to human as just that. **(**We can understand this by self-analyzing in terms of the question of **"Who am I?"** I can say that I am a Delhiite, a north Indian, an Indian, a worker, an aspirant, a son/brother/mother/father , an Asian, a Brahmin/Kshatriya/Baniya/Dalit etc. All of these identities are artificially created , they belong to the social world created by Man. We can change it or give relative importance as per our own will for eg. I can start referring and emphasizing on only one of my identity say an aspirant and disregard my all other identities **)** He believes that science and rationality should be the only preceptor for humans. We should not get swayed by religion, faith or god. He rather treats religion as fables or stories which can impress only an immature mind(Thus diverging from our deeply religious MK Gandhi) . He however has trust in philosophy and believes that using science we can create philosophy of life.

Radical Humanism is based on the struggle for existence at three level and thus can be called to be based on 3 pillars:

* Freedom: Roy holds it is also existential and materialistic in its origin. Man is free when he is able to do whatever it takes to ensure his survival. The freedom to have material pleasures for not just sustenance but also luxuries of life ( This is a major difference point from Gandhi and Similarity to Marx)
* Reason: During the course of struggle for existence , Man would find out what is right and what is wrong. Thus forming the basis of reason
* Ethics: Roy contends that ethics has also materialistic origins. During the course of struggle of existence the society would be approving of some actions of man while being condescending of the others. Thus giving the sense of right and wrong as per social acceptance and inturn forms the basis of Ethics

The concept of Radical Humanism is thus human in the sense that it keeps humans at the centre and is radical because it treats humans in a radical way.

Roy's program of radical democracy is to complement on the his concept of radical humanism and provide a political program for it. It includes voluntary associations for governance which is close to Gandhian ideals of Swaraj (philosophical anarchism)

***------------------------Conclusion-------------------------------***