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The Vision and Impact of Deendayal Upadhyaya as a Journalist and Author

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Abstract:
Deendayal Upadhyaya was not only a political thinker but also a prolific journalist who played a significant role in shaping Indian journalism. He contributed extensively as an editor, columnist, and novelist, emphasising value-based journalism rooted in ethics and national consciousness. He was instrumental in founding and managing publications such as *Rashtradharma*, *Panchjanya*, and *Swadesh*, which served as platforms for socio-political discourse. This paper examines the contributions of Deendayal Upadhyaya to Indian journalism, focusing on his role as a journalist, columnist, and novelist. It explores his journalistic philosophy, his advocacy for ethical reporting, and his influence on media narratives. His works, including *Samrat Chandragupta*, *Jagadguru Shankaracharya*, *Akhand Bharat Kyon*, and *The Two Plans*, reflect his deep engagement with political and economic issues. By analysing his writings and their impact, this study highlights the legacy of Deendayal Upadhyaya in Indian journalism and his role in promoting a media culture centred on values and national interest.

Keywords: Indian journalism; Ethical reporting; National consciousness; Media and politics

I. Introduction

Deendayal Upadhyaya was a prominent Indian philosopher, prolific writer, journalist, thinker, social worker and political leader whose contribution to Indian journalism remains significant. While he is primarily known for his political and organisational skills, his role in shaping Indian journalism deserves equal recognition. He believed that journalism was not just a profession but a mission to serve society. He saw the press as a tool for national awakening rather than a means of personal or commercial gain. His writings reflected deep thought, ethical values, and a strong commitment to national interest.

During the freedom struggle and the early years of independent India, journalism was driven by ideals rather than commercial motives. Many great leaders used newspapers to spread awareness and mobilise public opinion. Deendayal Upadhyaya represented this tradition, where journalism was a responsibility toward the nation. He became actively involved in journalism with the publication of *Rashtradharma* in the 1940s. Though his name was never officially listed as an editor, his presence was strongly felt through his thought-provoking articles. He selected content carefully, ensuring that the writings maintained a positive approach while allowing space for balanced criticism.

He continued his mission of promoting nationalist thought. Even when he moved to active politics, he maintained close relations with journalists and regularly wrote columns. One of his well-known columns, *Political Diary*, published in the *Organiser*, demonstrated his ability to analyse political issues with clarity and fairness. Although he was critical of certain policies of the Nehru government, he always maintained a respectful tone. He believed that the role of a journalist was to report facts truthfully, even if they did not align with personal or political ideologies.

Deendayal Upadhyaya emphasised ethical journalism and discouraged sensationalism. He advised young journalists to be responsible while criticising political leaders. He once remarked that while it was necessary to point out the faults of government policies, the language used should be respectful and not driven by personal bias. His mantra was simple: "Don't distort the news." He believed that media should not mislead readers by presenting statements out of context. Even in cases where newspapers held ideological positions, he maintained that their loyalty should be to the nation rather than any political party or organisation.

This study explores the vision of Deendayal Upadhyaya of journalism, his role as an editor and, columnist, novelist, and the legacy he left behind. It examines how he maintained journalistic ethics while

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addressing political and social issues. The study also highlights his thoughts on the role of media in shaping national identity and the responsibility of journalists in a democratic society. By analysing his contributions, this research aims to understand his relevance in the media landscape and the continued importance of value-based journalism.

II. Method and Materials

This research employs a qualitative method to examine the journalistic and literary contributions of Deendayal Upadhyaya, focusing on his ethical approach and nationalist perspective. The study relies on primary sources such as his writings, editorials, and speeches to understand his views on journalism and literature. Secondary sources, including books, scholarly articles, and historical analyses, provide context and interpretation of his work within the broader landscape of Indian media and intellectual thought.

The Role of Deendayal Upadhyaya in Journalism

Deendayal Upadhyaya was deeply involved in journalism, using it as a powerful tool to spread nationalist ideas and cultural values. His role in shaping the ideological discourse through print media was significant. His work in journalism was not just about reporting events but also about influencing public opinion and strengthening nationalist thought in post-independence India.

He played a key role in establishing and managing several important politically-affiliated publications. In 1945, he helped launch *Rashtradharma*, a monthly magazine, and *Panchajanya*, a weekly journal. These publications were meant to counter British colonial narratives and promote the cultural and political ideals. Later, he was also involved in the establishment of the daily newspaper *Swadesh*. Unlike many editors who focus only on writing, Upadhyaya was involved in every stage of publishing. He worked as a writer, editor, and compositor and even operated printing machines. His dedication ensured that these publications remained active and influential despite financial and logistical challenges.

The leadership of Deendayak Upadhayaya shaped the editorial policies of these journals. The content of *Rashtradharma* and *Panchajanya* reflected his vision of nationalism, which is deeply rooted in the historical and cultural traditions of India. He believed that the national identity of India should be based on its ancient Hindu heritage, and he used these publications to advocate this view.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the primary source of political ideology was these journals. Upadhyaya used them to address contemporary political issues, particularly those related to Partition, national unity, and cultural preservation. His writings were not just opinion pieces; they were carefully crafted arguments aimed at awakening a sense of pride and responsibility among Indians.

One of the major themes in the journalist work of Deendayal Upadhyaya was his strong opposition to the Partition of India. He viewed Partition as a result of the British policy of divide and rule, as well as the willingness of the Congress party to compromise on national unity. Through his writings in *Rashtradharma* and *Panchajanya*, he criticised the two-nation theory and argued that an undivided India was essential for maintaining its cultural and historical continuity. He saw Partition as not just a territorial division but as a deep wound in the cultural fabric of India. He believed that the decision to accept Partition was a mistake that weakened the country and led to long-term communal tensions. His writings on this issue were passionate and aimed at reinforcing the idea that India's strength lay in its unity.

Apart from political issues, Upadhyaya also used journalism to promote cultural nationalism. He believed that the strength of India came from its spiritual and philosophical traditions. His articles often highlighted the ancient heritage of India, its achievements in philosophy, science, and art, and the need to preserve and revive these traditions in modern times. He was also critical of Western influences that, in his view, weakened the cultural identity of India. He argued that while India could adopt modern technologies and administrative systems, it should not lose its cultural roots. Through *Rashtradharma* and *Panchajanya*, he emphasised the importance of self-reliance, moral values, and social cohesion.

For Upadhyaya, journalism was not just about reporting news; it was a means to inspire and educate society. He believed that newspapers and magazines should serve as instruments of social and political awakening rather than just sources of information. This belief guided his work as an editor and writer. Through his editorials and articles, he sought to shape public opinion on critical issues. Whether it was the need for economic self-sufficiency, the dangers of political appeasement, or the importance of cultural education, his writings always aimed to create awareness and encourage action.

Although he later became more active in politics and organisational work, his contributions to journalism remained influential. The publications he

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helped establish continued to be key platforms for political ideology. His approach to journalism, combining historical analysis, cultural advocacy, and political commentary, set a model for nationalist writing in India.

Even today, his writings in *Rashtradharma* and *Panchajanya* are studied for their insights into Indian nationalism, cultural identity, and political philosophy. His role in journalism not only strengthened the ideological foundations but also left a lasting impact on the broader discourse of Indian nationalism.

The Literary Contributions of Deendayal Upadhyaya

Deendayal Upadhyaya was not only a political thinker and journalist but also a writer who used literature as a medium to express his ideological beliefs. His literary works reflect his deep understanding of Indian history, culture, and nationalism. While his later writings were primarily focused on political, economic, and social issues, his early works included two historical novels-*Samrat Chandragupt* (1946) and *Jagadguru Shankaracharya* (1947). These novels were not written purely for artistic expression but served as a way to convey his views on national identity, leadership, and cultural unity.

Samrat Chandragupt (1946)

Samrat Chandragupta is a historical novel based on the life of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya Empire. The novel portrays his transformation from an ordinary youth to a powerful ruler under the guidance of Chanakya. It emphasises the themes of national unity, self-governance, and strategic leadership. Upadhyaya presents Chandragupta as a symbol of political strength and resilience. The interactions between Chandragupta and Chanakya highlight the importance of discipline and strong leadership in building a prosperous nation. The novel was written during a time of political turmoil in India, and Upadhyaya used this historical story to inspire patriotism and a sense of self-reliance among readers.

Jagadguru Shankaracharya (1947)

This novel is based on the life and teachings of Adi Shankaracharya, the great Hindu philosopher and theologian. Upadhyaya portrays Shankaracharya not only as a spiritual leader but also as a unifier of Indian philosophical traditions. The novel focuses on his intellectual debates, his revival of Vedic traditions, and his efforts to establish a strong cultural identity. One of the key themes in the book is the philosophical conflict between Buddhism and Hinduism. Upadhyaya presents Shankaracharya as a defender of Hindu culture, working to restore its prominence. His depiction aligns with his belief that the national identity of India is deeply rooted in its spiritual heritage.

The novel also highlights the participation of women in intellectual and spiritual debates. The wife of Mandan Mishra, who challenges Shankaracharya in a debate, is portrayed as an intelligent and independent thinker. This aspect of the novel suggests that Upadhyaya acknowledged the role of women in the cultural and philosophical history of India. Like *Samrat Chandragupta*, this novel was not just a literary work but a way for Upadhyaya to reinforce his ideas of cultural unity and nationalism.

After 1947, Upadhyaya shifted his focus from historical fiction to political and ideological writing. His essays and speeches addressed a wide range of topics, including nationalism, cultural identity, economic policies, and social issues. Many of his writings were published in *Rashtradharma*, *Panchajanya*, and *Swadesh*, the journals he helped establish. One of his most significant works was *Why Undivided India?* (*Akhand Bharat Kyun?*), published in 1952 by the Uttar Pradesh unit of the Jan Sangh. This book reflects his thoughts on national unity and the idea of *Akhand Bharat* (Undivided India).

Akhand Bharat Kyun? (Why Undivided India?)

Deendayal Upadhyaya strongly believed that the Partition of India in 1947 was a historical tragedy. In *Akhand Bharat Kyun*, he argued that the pain of Partition was still alive in the hearts of millions of Indians, especially those who were displaced. He held the Muslim League and its leader, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, responsible for collaborating with the British in dividing the country. He described August 15, 1947, as both a moment of independence and a *black day* in Indian history because the nation was divided into two separate states.

However, Upadhyaya also pointed out that despite the political division, the people of India and Pakistan shared common ancestors, culture, and traditions. He viewed *Akhand Bharat* not merely as a territorial ambition but as a cultural and spiritual ideal. He wrote that national unity could not be achieved through political agreements alone but must be built on a shared cultural foundation. He warned that making compromises for short-term political gains, such as granting special privileges to certain communities, would only lead to further divisions.

According to Upadhyaya, history could not be rewritten simply with ink. It had been written with the

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blood of millions who had suffered due to Partition. He saw the idea of *Akhand Bharat* as essential for fostering nationalism among Indians. The book traces the cultural and spiritual unity of India from the Vedic period to modern times, emphasising that this unity must be preserved for the progress of the country. Through this work, Upadhyaya successfully conveyed the message of national integration and unity. His arguments in *Akhand Bharat Kyun?* became a core ideological belief of the Jan Sangh, shaping its policies and political vision.

Ethics and Dignity in the Journalism of Deendayal Upadhyaya

Deendayal Upadhyaya upheld the highest standards of ethical journalism. He strongly believed that journalists should maintain dignity in their writing and carefully choose their words. He emphasised that responsible journalism requires restraint, objectivity, and a commitment to truth. For him, journalism was not just about reporting facts but about shaping national consciousness with wisdom and integrity.

Upadhyaya believed that the use of language in journalism should reflect responsibility and discipline. He insisted that journalists should avoid sensationalism and emotional outbursts in their writing. He argued that when a journalist reacts with unnecessary excitement or harsh words, the argument loses its strength and credibility. He maintained that the dignity of words is essential in journalism because it ensures clarity, effectiveness, and respect in public discourse.

He often used the metaphor, "Fingers are not only cut by knives but also by the edge of paper." This statement reflected his belief that sharp and well-constructed arguments are more powerful than aggressive language. He urged journalists to refine their reasoning rather than use words that could incite anger or division. For Upadhyaya, journalism was a means of intellectual engagement, not a tool for personal attacks or emotional venting.

The journalistic vision of Upadhyaya was marked by humility and respect, even when expressing strong opinions. His colleague, Madhav Sadashivrao Golwalkar, recalled that Upadhyaya never used harsh or offensive language, even while critiquing others. He was known for his calm and composed manner of communication, which allowed him to express his views without generating hostility. He never let ideological differences turn into personal conflicts. Instead, he focused on constructive criticism and presenting alternative viewpoints with logic and evidence.

This principle was evident in his editorial decisions. When *Panchjanya* published an article titled *Akaltakht ke Kaal* regarding the hunger strike of Sant Fateh Singh, Upadhyaya insisted on changing the title. He explained that such a phrase could provoke unnecessary bitterness and reduce the possibility of mutual understanding. He believed that journalism should encourage dialogue, not division. Similarly, in the July 1953 special issue of *Panchjanya* on economic policies, editor Mahendra Kulshreshtha used the word 'foolish' to criticise the approach of Ashok Mehta to cooperation with the government. Upadhyaya objected to the use of this word and advised that a milder term should be used instead. He believed that respectful criticism was more effective and would help maintain the reputation of the magazine.

Upadhyaya also maintained ethical standards in the use of images and cartoons. He was highly conscious of how visual elements could influence public perception and emotions. In 1968, when *Organiser* published a satirical cartoon showing the then Home Minister Y.B. Chavan slaughtering the bull of democracy, Upadhyaya expressed his concern. Although the cartoon was meant to symbolise political instability, he felt that the imagery was too extreme and could be disturbing for readers. He advised against using such visuals, even for satire, as they could provoke unnecessary controversy. For him, journalism was not about attacking opponents but about presenting facts and ideas with responsibility. He believed that even cartoons and satire should maintain a certain level of decorum and should not cross ethical boundaries.

The journalistic ethics of Deendayal Upadhyaya extended to political criticism. He firmly believed that journalism should not be used as a platform for personal attacks, even against political rivals. This was evident when *Panchjanya* published an editorial criticising the policies of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on Tibet and China. The editorial, written by Yadavrao Deshmukh, carried the title *Gajastr Na Hanyate*, which conveyed strong disapproval of the actions of Nehru. After reading the editorial, Upadhyaya remarked that while the article itself was well-written, the title should have been chosen more carefully. He reminded the editor that, despite ideological differences, Nehru was still the Prime Minister of the country. He believed that journalists should criticise policies, not individuals, and should always maintain the dignity of public offices. According to Upadhyaya, the responsibility of a journalist was to educate and inform the public, not to spread animosity or disrespect.

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The journalism of Deendayal Upadhyaya was based on humility, respect, and ethical responsibility. In contrast, modern journalism often focuses on sensationalism, strong rhetoric, and personal attacks. Many journalists today use provocative language to attract attention, sometimes at the cost of truth and balance. He believed that journalism should serve the national interest and foster constructive debates. He maintained that journalists should avoid using language that could create divisions or provoke unnecessary conflicts. His approach was based on the idea that the role of a journalist is to guide society with wisdom and restraint, rather than inflaming emotions for short-term impact.

The commitment of Deendayal to ethical journalism was not just theoretical, it was reflected in his work and editorial decisions. He was not interested in personal recognition but in upholding journalistic integrity. He promoted a form of journalism that was rooted in Indian values and focused on national welfare. His approach serves as a reminder that journalism should be a mission for truth and public service rather than a tool for controversy or personal gain.

III. Conclusion

Deendayal Upadhyaya made a lasting impact on journalism and literature in India. He promoted journalism based on ethics, responsibility, and national values. He believed that the media should serve as a tool for national awakening rather than a means for personal gain or political propaganda. His approach emphasised fairness, restraint, and constructive dialogue.

The writings of Deendayal Upadhyaya were clear, direct, and deeply rooted in Indian traditions. His historical novels were rich in detail and emotion, while his political essays were analytical and persuasive. He had a unique ability to connect historical events with contemporary issues, making his writings relevant and thought-provoking. Although he did not continue writing fiction after *Jagadguru Shankaracharya*, his contributions to journalism and political literature remained influential. His writings played a crucial role in shaping the ideological foundations of Jan Sangh. They continue to be referenced in discussions on Indian nationalism and cultural identity.

While his literary output was limited compared to his political and journalistic work, the impact of his writings was significant. His books and essays served as tools for ideological education, inspiring readers to reflect on the history of India, its culture, and its future. The legacy of Deendayal Upadhyaya as a writer lies in his ability to use literature as a means of social and political awakening, reinforcing his vision of a strong, united, and self-reliant India.

His contributions to literature were equally significant. He was a deep thinker and writer who addressed issues related to governance, economy, and society. His philosophy of *Integral Humanism* provided an alternative economic and political vision that emphasised the welfare of all sections of society. His literary works continue to influence discussions on political and economic thought in India. The influence of Upadhyaya in journalism extended beyond his own writings. Many journalists and writers who worked with him or were inspired by his ideas adopted his principles of ethical journalism. He believed in avoiding sensationalism and maintaining dignity in public discourse. His legacy continues to guide responsible journalism and intellectual debates in India today.

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