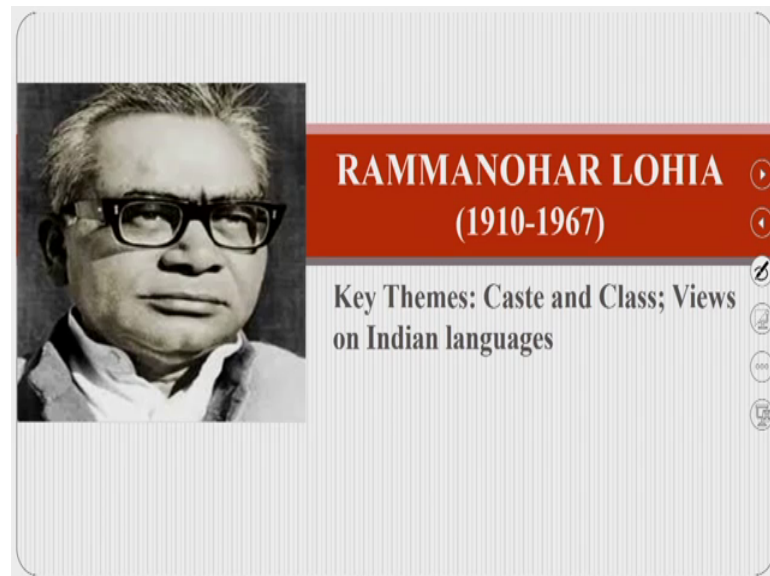


Introduction to Modern Indian Political Thought
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Lecture – 28
Rammanohar Lohia: Caste and Class

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Hello and welcome friends to this second lecture on Rammanohar Lohia. Today we are going to discuss his views on caste and class, and also his views on socialism. In the previous lecture we have discussed Rammanohar Lohia, his personal political life and also the philosophical basis of his thought and his ideas on caste, on socialism or on language, or a lot of social hierarchy, and how to rebuild or reconstruct Indian society according to the principal of socialism, and what should be the basis of that socialism, and how that is different from the European models of socialism, or many scholars arguing about democratic socialism in India also.

So, today we are going to focus basically his thought on caste and class, and also on gender. And in that we will discuss how his approach differ from many social scientist or a scholars who were talking about this social categories, but the differ a very substantially from Lohia it is kind of approach to understand all these categories and see them together to understand the stratification or the social hierarchy that we have in India, and then how to remove that hierarchy or build a new society.

So, that we will see through Rammanohar Lohia, and then we will also discuss his views on socialism. And in the next lecture we are going to discuss his views on language, and how his understanding of language differs very much from the many caricature, that we now come to associate with Lohia, when it comes to understand or when it comes to recognise or engage with his views on language.

So, as I was discussing in my previous lectures, there is a kind of tendency, when it comes to engage with Lohia. Among the followers, there is uncritical submission to Lohia and his thought. And those who are critic they have a kind of caricature of Lohia even without engaging with his tricks for, and not to say about not engaging critically with his thoughts, and ideas which is very relevant certainly in our contemporary times.

So, today when we will discuss his views on caste and class. We will realise that approach he is talking about; is becoming more and more relevant in social science discourse, whether it comes to moving away from euro centrism or excessive reliance on the concepts or methods produced in a non produced in western European societies, and then applied in India to explain or to interpret Indian society or Indian reality or the intersectionality.

That is now coming together or taking into account different aspects or different layers or different levels or different categories, which produce social hierarchy social exploitation, and take them together to understand how these hierarchy be it caste class gender language comes together to form or produce hierarchy or exploitation in everyday lives.

So, Lohia is becoming more and more relevant even in contemporary times and yet there is a kind of conspicuous silence about engaging with his thought critically even among this many scholars. And so, that is not to say there is no resurgence. So, in certainly last 5 or 10 years, there is a kind of re-emergence of interest in Lohia and his writings, but certainly for a very long time after death of Lohia, there has been a conspicuous silence, and what were the reason for such silence we have discussed in the previous lecture, because of his politics, or because of his critic certainly to Nehru to English and to the upper caste domination in public and political life of India. There is some of the reasons which actually led to the kind of silence that we have seen for a very long time when it comes to engaging with Lohia and his thoughts.

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➤ Social scientists in India for long dealt with the question of social stratification. While dealing with this, they have referred to many categories such as caste, class, gender, language, and ethnicity etc. Their approaches to this question can be divided into two categories: one which deals with a singular category; and the other which take into account multiplicity of these factors which together reproduce hierarchies and inequalities in Indian society.

➤ Rammanohar Lohia's approach was an intersectional one which dealt with the dynamics and interrelations of caste, class, gender and language in reproducing and perpetuating inequalities, exploitations and exclusions in India. According to Anand Kumar, Lohia's approach 'presented a multidimensional, differentiated and graded view of the structure of inequalities and exploitations' in India.

➤ His major works include: *The Caste System* (1964); *Fragments of a World Mind* (1949); *The Wheel of History* (1955); *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* (1963); *India China and Northern Frontiers* (1963). He also published weekly *Chaukhambha* and monthly *Jan* in Hindi and monthly *Mankind* in English.

So, to understand his thought on caste and class or to understand the social stratification in India, so many social scientist or a scholars and political leaders or thinkers have tried to explain the root cause of caste and how to see caste in relationship with other categories; be it gender or language or religion, and we have discussed through same certainly with B R Ambedkar, his theorisation of caste and how to eradicate the caste.

You will find Rammanohar Lohia having a very different approach or more holistic approach to understand this problem also the intersectionality. So, he is not reducing the social cleavages or hierarchies to any one particular category, be it class or caste or gender. So, he is taking a more broader and holistic approach to understand social hierarchy.

So, while dealing with this question of social stratification, the social scientist have referred to many categories. So, caste, class, gender, language and ethnicity and religion and many such like categories to understand social reality or to understand the hierarchy or stratification of Indian society; however, there approach to this question can be broadly divided into 2 broad categories. First is among those which deals with a singular category. So, you will find many text, many speeches, many writings taking into account any one category; be it caste or be it language, be it gender to understand or explain the social reality or the hierarchies in Indian society.

However, on the other hand, you will find the individuals taking into account multiplicity of these factors. So, maybe two or more and all of them together to understand the Indian society in a more holistic way so, multiplicity of these factors which together reproduce hierarchies and inequalities in Indian society so, they when explain Indian society and Indian reality do not rely or do not give primacy to one category over the others. So, there is no kind of prioritization of category or a kind of particular kind of discrimination or the social cleavages. So, there is a kind of intersectional approach to understand how all these categories come together to create a power hierarchy or a power relationship.

And then the approach to readdress these hierarchies or operations requires multifaceted approach, and Lohia was arguing about such things. So, Rammanohar Lohia's approach was an intersectionalist. I will explain this word; intersectionalist as I saying take into account the multiplicities of categories which comes together to reproduce a matrix of power relationship, which divide the society and create a kind of power hierarchy between and among the member of that society.

Now, this kind of approach in sociology or in political science to understand different forms of exploitation or domination is becoming more and more relevant, but in the very beginning of India's post independent journey, Lohia took a very intersectionalist approach to understand the dynamics of caste and class in Indian condition. So, Rammanohar Lohia's approach was an intersectionalist one which dealt with a dynamics and the interrelations between or of caste class gender and language in reproducing and perpetuating inequalities exploitation and exclusions in India.

So, to understand these exploitation exclusions or operations in India and how it get reproduced in everyday lives hm. Lohia had a very broader, holistic or intersectionalist approach to understand how these categories; be it caste and we as we proceed in this lecture we come to know how caste produce the hierarchy and it oscillates between class and caste, and caste with gender and how all these together come and relate with the issue of language whether ruling class in India is speaking English and that is the critic of Lohia and his struggle for Indian languages against the Angrezi.

So, his Angrezi [FL] or remove or abolish English was not against a language purse. It was against a kind of status that is provided by those provided to them who speak this language. So, the hierarchy that it constructs Lohia had problem with that hierarchy. So,

in this way, Lohia's approach was a kind of holistic intersectionalist to understand the dynamics and the interrelationships of all these categories together. And how they come together and construct a power matrix is something which Lohia was engaged to understand and or to explain and then to fight against.

So, according to sociology professor Anand Kumar he writes that Lohia's approach presented a multidimensional differentiated and graded view of the structure of inequalities and exploitations in India. So, then he went taking into account these categories did not essentialize anyone. So, of course, Lohia was for social equality or social justice, but the social inequality that is produced in India is so multi-layered and it has so much of graded hierarchy or inequality that it requires more complex or more region specific.

So, with in India how caste operates in one part of the country, and same caste operate in a different fashion in different parts of the country; Lohia was sensitive enough to understand the specificities of the same categories working in different parts of the country.

And also how different categories caste, class, gender, language, come together to produce a kind of hierarchy or a matrix of power which differentiate between the ruling class or ruling leads and the masses. So, as Anand Kumar has rightly said, that he presented a multidimensional approach not essentializing any category, but to see it in connection or in inter relationship with other such categories which reproduce hierarchy which reproduce domination and differentiation.

So, he presented a multidimensional differentiated and graded view. Therefore, to the structure of inequality and an exploitations in India and therefore, Lohia is more relevant even for contemporary politics or contemporary realities in society and perhaps more relevant today then he was writing about his views on caste or class.

Now, his major works for today's class the caste system and also Marx Gandhi and socialism which he wrote in 1963 is very relevant for today's lecture, but his otherwise like fragments of a world mind or the wheel of history; partly we have discussed it from this in our previous lecture, and also India china and northern frontiers. So, he has the passion or he share it with other modern Indian political thinkers, about role of India in the larger humanity. And he argued for a world government or world parliament and

consider himself as a world citizen so that side of Lohia is also very much present; when he is talking about India specificities or conceptualizing the distinct socialism that should be applicable to India or critiquing eurocentrism or reliance on Eurocentric concepts and methods.

Yet he is also arguing for a kind of world government or the world parliament. So, beside the stakes Lohia also published some weekly magazines like Chaukhambha and Jan, which is a monthly or Chaukhambha which was a weekly Hindi magazines. And also he published one as the name suggest and I was saying the mankind, this was a English monthly which he published through with writings.

And therefore, the as I was saying in this course again and again; the all the thinkers were deeply embedded in the politics of their time. And so, was Lohia and Lohia is more distinct because of his rebel nature or a rebel socialist or a visionary thinker, working many times against the government policies, against the prime minister Nehru and many of his policies in the post independent India.

And while being embedded in the politics he had a very futuristic vision for reconstructing Indian society, and in that futuristic vision he did not essentialized any categories or any particular section of Indian society. So, he had a vision for reconstructing India or Indian society in a new way based on his philosophy or his understanding of socialism. And this visionary thinking in Lohia was embedded in his practices.

So, be it his writings his pamphlets his active involvement in the organisational politics or socialist party, or samyukta socialist party forming aligns against the congress, in all this activities he actually represented a kind of thinker deeply embedded in the politics of his time. And yet, reflective enough or visionary enough to think about the holistic approach to the social problems or the political or the global challenges that humanity as a whole was facing. And he provided the solution of which was in many ways very innovative and original in comparison to the many scholars or scientist having a kind of derivative approach to the many of the many of the challenges that India was facing.

So, through these writings Lohia continued to present his views on many issues social political specific to India or non-western societies, and also the global challenges that was happening. So, the capitalism the divide produces or the communalism the problem

or the dead end in which it interrupt itself, and how it cannot be applicable to non-western society especially like India, Lohia had the far sighted vision or thinking about many of such challenges.

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Lohia's views on 'caste' and class

- Lohia recognized caste as the primary form of inequality in Indian society without essentialising it. Lohia's approach to caste and class question was very different from the contemporary Marxists approach which solely focused on the dynamics of class and reduced other categories such as caste and gender to the secondary importance.
- His approach was distinct from the caste based approach of Periyar and Ambedkar too. Although he agreed with Periyar on the necessity to eliminate caste because mere reforms will not help. However, he differed with him on the issues of violent anti-Brahminism; campaigns against Gandhi, the Indian Constitution and Hindi in the name of attacking caste system. His approach is distinct also from that of Ambedkar in the sense that Lohia paid relatively greater attention to the aspect of gender-based oppression along with caste. In this regard his approach on caste comes closer to Jyotiba Phule.
- Lohia used these terms in their generic sense. These were not used in their specific connotations in Indian or western context but involved a more general meaning. He believed that there exist a kind of oscillation between caste and class.

If we look at specifically about this issue of caste and class in Lohia, Lohia recognised caste as the primary form of inequality inequality. So, for Lohia question of inequality especially the economic inequality is the root cause of all kind of social exploitation or operation in the society. So, that is the root, but he did not actually gave primacy and therefore, he was actually fighting for social equality and social justice and his whole politics was oriented towards creating a society with less and less equality. And that less and less equality is not just between economics on the economic sense, but also in the social or cultural sense also.

So, the how to understand the inequality or the economy economic inequality in India he argued that to understand economic inequality, you cannot just rely on the category of class as a category to understand the economic inequality. You have to include into it the question of caste as well as gender and also the language to understand how inequality is produced and the social status attached to a particular group or particular category operates in India or within India in different parts of India. So, he was having a more nuance more objective or it kind of multiplicities of approach or a kind of understanding

about all these categories individually and then how it they come together to reproduce the exploitation or inequalities in India.

So, Lohia recognizes the caste although the primary reason or root cause of inequality in Indian society which reflected in it is culture in it is economy, in it is polity, or in it is society. So, he considered the caste as the primary forming quality, and shares with many radical social reformers who wanted caste to be eradicated and not to be reformed. So, unlike many scholars like Gandhi and many others viewer arguing about reforming the caste, Lohia shares with Periyar, Ambedkar and many other social reformers they need to eradicate or destroy the caste system.

So, caste system for him is the root cause of social inequality in India, but he did not essentialize it and the understanding of the caste is not without reducing all forms of inequality just to the caste. So, he had a kind of intersectionalist approach, as I was arguing to see how caste operates in India, and how it affects other aspire of Indian lives. But also how the caste operates the same caste operates in different parts of India, and how to understand the domination and subordination, and the layers of graded inequality that it reproduce in everyday lives of Indian people.

So, his understanding of caste as a primary root of all social or economic inequality; however, he did not essentialize the concept of caste. So, Lohia's approach to caste and class question was very different from say many Marxists contemporary Marxist approach; which solely focused on the dynamics of class and reduced other category such as caste or gender as the secondary importance. So, in many Marxist explanation or interpretation of Indian society the primacies attached to the question of class.

And caste and other forms of social hierarchy or social discrimination is given the same kind of secondary status or in priority, it comes second to the question or category of class. Lohia differs very substantially completely from this kind of prioritising one form of inequality over the other. And the problem with that kind of a project misses the oscillations between caste and class especially in Indian society. So, his approach was distinct from the approaches of say Periyar or Ambedkar. So, he agreed with Periyar on the necessity of eliminating the caste, because may reforms will not help in reconstructing constructing the society based on social equality or social justice.

However, he differs from Periyar on many issues such as the violent anti-brahminism. So, Lohia himself Gandhian and Gandhi's method of politics of nonviolence or satyagraha had deeply influenced Lohia so much so that when the socialist party government under the socialist party government, there was firing on the people, he actually asked the socialist party to resign from the government.

So, the nonviolent method as the possible or as the most appropriate form of politics to reform or reconstruct the society led Lohia even when he agreed with the overall objective of the caste politics, and to eradicate it he differed with Periyar on the question of the violence anti-brahminism and also his campaigns against Gandhi or Indian constitution, and also Hindi in the name of attacking the caste system. So, he differs with Periyar also when he is in agreement with the question of eradicating the caste system; where not just being satisfied with the reform in the caste system.

So, his approach is also one that can be found very distinct from Ambedkar where Lohia paid relatively more or greater attention to the aspect of gender, or how women among the backward classes suffer double operations. And therefore, in the rise of the feminist movement, and once again we find Lohia far more ahead of his times we will come to discuss that when we talk about his views on gender.

But Indian feminism or Indian feminist movement as we see in our contemporary terms, how will we take into account the views or writings of Lohia on the question of gender. But when he is articulating his response to the caste system, he differs from Periyar as I have just discussed, but also with Ambedkar because he focuses or gave more attention to the question of gender-based operation along with the caste. And in this regard we find Lohia's approach to the caste system is closer to Mahatma Phule or Jyotiba Phule.

So, here on this question of caste and class as a category also, you find Lohia use these terms in their generic sense. Generic is more a general and not a specific to a society. So, these are not used in their specific connotation in Indian or western context. So, suppose we say caste is only India's specific, or class is only a result or consequence of the industrial development or capitalism or say European or western origin.

For Lohia he actually de-indianizes the caste or decolonizes the caste, but also he de-europeanizes the class as well. So, as professor Anand Kumar is arguing that they in Lohia the interpretation or the connotation of caste and class is done in a more innovative

way, to make it applicable to understand the social realities in different different countries in different context, and not a specific to a particular society be it Indian or western or European.

So, in many societies in this more generic sense, where caste is a kind of immobile class, or class is a mobile caste, that happens in all the societies in most of the societies historically. So, he argued and make it a kind of maxim or a principal to understand the social hierarchy or inequalities in India; where there is a kind of oscillation between caste and class and there is a dynamic interrelationship between the 2 in terms of producing and perpetuating social inequalities and hierarchy.

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His views on the caste system

Caste restricts opportunity. Restricted opportunity constricts ability. Constricted ability further restricts opportunity. Where caste prevails, opportunity and ability are restricted to ever-narrowing circles of the people.

- Lohia

- He regarded caste as both 'a discriminating social structure' and 'a disabling cultural phenomenon'. Caste with its inherent inequality, stratification and cruelty have resulted in dehumanization of both the oppressed and oppressive castes and responsible for the fragmentation of Indian society.
- He considered the presumed superiority of mental work over manual work which is at the core of the caste system unnatural. He regarded that there is nothing like a pure mental or manual work.
- Lohia thought that destruction of this inhuman system was not easy. It required a multi-dimensional attacks on philosophical, religious, political, historical, economic, social roots of the caste system.

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So, if you look at his views on the caste system, we can perhaps begin with his analysis of the consequences of the caste system on the nation as a whole or a society as a whole. So, he writes caste as I was saying the immobile class. So, caste restricts opportunity. Restricted opportunity constricts ability. Constricted ability further restricts opportunity. So, where caste prevails opportunity and ability are restricted to ever narrowing circle of the people, and that is the major reason for fragmentation in Indian society or social cleavages or the caste operations or the privilege that is associated to particular caste or particular individual depending upon their education or their use of language wealth or the caste status.

So, we will discuss about this divide between ruling class and the masses in India also. But caste is a problem caste is the biggest problem or impediment in creating a society which is based on social justice or social equality, because it restricts opportunities. So, there is a kind of reduction or in kind of restriction in the opportunity that is available to different caste or different groups. So, caste restricts opportunity, so some opportunity or most of the opportunities are open to only a particular limited caste. That restriction of opportunity also constrict the ability. And this constricted ability further restricts the opportunity; where then where caste prevail opportunity and ability are restricted to ever narrowing circles of the people.

So, there is a gradual concentration of power among the fewer and fewer people in the hierarchy. And that he see saw as a problem for not just creating a new society or constructing, or transforming the existing hierarchy or social exploitations, but also to democratise the all aspire of society including the power relationship or power that flows from top to bottom or bottom to top.

So, on this question of inequalities to which Lohia argued again and again and considered it as the root cause of all the problems, all the challenges that India or a humanity as a whole was facing, and he considered twentieth century in many views is a revolution against all kind of operations and exploitation; be it caste, be it class, be it ideology based political domination of one country over the other, all there is a kind of or gender specific exploitation. So, there is a kind of multifaceted approach or fight or evolution against all these forms should (Refer Time: 29:10) and that is something which he considered unique in the twentieth century history.

So, the case in that approach prevent the opening up of opportunity and allowing the abilities to realise it is potential because of this restriction based on caste. And that creates a problem which leads to ever narrowing circle of the people which enjoy enormous power and have great status attached to that power. So, he regarded caste as both a discriminating social structure, and a disabling cultural phenomenon. And that is intertwined in his, so it is not just about a particular status of individual in the society, but also there is a whole cultural political and material benefits associated with once caste and entity. And that is the major problem which he thought.

So, caste with its inherent inequality stratification and cruelty have resulted in dehumanization of both the oppressed and the oppressive castes and is responsible for the fragmentation of Indian society. So, caste which is inherently based on equality or stratification or dehumanization of one caste over the other or how a superior caste sees it is inferior with contempt. That is the major problem which leads to dehumanization of both the oppressed and the oppressive, and there we see a kind of similar approach to the Ambedkar's approach to this whole question of caste, which prevents a kind of public opinion, or a morality which transcends the caste-based limited sense of ethics, loyalty or morality tool in Indian society.

So, Lohia also believes that because of this inherent inequality stratification and cruelty in the caste system, it leads to dehumanization of both the oppressed and the oppressive and is responsible for the fragmentation of Indian society. And he considered the presumed superiority of mental work over manual work, that is the basis or the notion of pure or pollution and relation of pure with the mental work or the intellectual work, and pollution with the manual work, that is involved he was very critical of this notion of superiority or inferiority on the basis of the work be it mental or the manual, he considered that unnatural and he regarded that there is nothing like a pure mental or manual work. And the value of this was and here is a kind of Gandhian approach to regard all forms of level with same respect or with dignity also Lohia.

So, Lohia thought that the destruction of this inhuman system was not easy because of its layered and graded nature of inequality, it required a multi-dimensional or multifaceted attacks on the philosophical, religious, political, historical, economic and the social roots of the caste system. So, there cannot be a kind of one-dimensional or a kind of selective or limited approach to root out this inhuman system of caste-based discrimination or inequality in India. So, he wanted to have a kind of multifaceted approach often in alignment with other categories, such as gender or language or class to root out this whole problem of caste system in India.

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- Although it exists in almost all of India, caste in its form and operation differs across the regions. Therefore, he stressed on the necessity of region-specific approach to eliminate caste.
- In his book *The Caste System*, Lohia writes that 90% of Indian population constitute backward sections of society. And that, 90% of government jobs and industry is controlled by the rest 10% of the population which is primarily represented by upper caste men.
- This concentration of power in the hands of upper caste men, according to Lohia, had paralyzed the country. Therefore, he pushed for the entry of the depressed sections of society into public life and administration through preferential treatment and demanded 60% of reservation for the backward sections of society barring some specialized services like surgery which requires specific expertise. He preferred this reservation not as a tool of individual selfish development but as the means of social equality and advancement of national prosperity.

However, Lohia is very sensitive as I was arguing about these plurality or multiplicities of caste experiences in different parts of country. So, just being anti brahminical does not necessarily lead to the eradication of caste or fighting the whole system as such. So, although the caste existed in almost all of India, caste in its form and operation differs across the regions. And therefore, he has stressed on the necessity of region specific approach to eliminate caste system.

So, there is no kind of simplistic, one size fit all kind of approach or a kind of universal approach to solve the caste problem. So, he having a kind of objective and as I was discussing in my previous lecture the focus on the present, and the present act and every act should justify its action or the consequences of its action the ethical or the moral basis.

So, the politics in Lohia in that sense is a more a kind of aesthetic act; a moral act to reform the society, and not about power or not about holding the office, but to helping in the transformation of the society to create or to make it more just or more equal. So, in doing that Lohia did not carry the colonial baggage or the kind of easy formula of using caste or its category as classified by the administration or the colonialization, he saw it in different parts of the country and he saw its operation and it is functioning differ from region to region. So, one group maybe subordinated in some part, but in the other part they may be a dominant or the hegemonic group.

Lohia was arguing about to have a kind of region specific approach to the caste problem and to eliminate it also. So, in his book the caste system Lohia writes that 90 percent of the Indian population constitute backward sections, or what he calls backward class. So, remember the first backward class commission by Kaka Kalelkar commission submitted the report, but it was not approved or accepted because of the problem in identifying or there are many contestation in identification of a group as a backward caste or as a backward class.

So, in the backdrop of such discourse, Lohia was arguing about that 90 percent of Indian people including among those who are poor among the [FL] or the so called upper caste and also certainly backward castes like SC's STs also the women or the minorities in the Christian or the religious minorities communities, that constitute his overall understanding of backward classes in India which he argued is about 90 percent of the population. And that 90 percent of government jobs and industry is controlled by the reach 10 percent of the population. And that is his stand political critique against the hegemony of upper caste, and that leads to some kind of you know as I was arguing about a silencing about Lohia and his works certainly after his death.

But as long as he lived till 1967, he prepared the ideological and the organisational basis for this rise of upper caste movement as we see and we have argued that Christophe Jaffrelot talking about the silent revolution in India. So, Lohia should be credited to providing the base for a such kind of politics or political leadership to emerge, and he was in many ways the propagator of such kind of such kind of politician rightly.

So, he is now and then there is a problem also then with the OBC movement, it is just the Lohia who is attributed, not just Lohia about his politics or his organizational work or ideological positions are attributed for the emergence of Mandal kind of politics or the reservation for the OBCs.

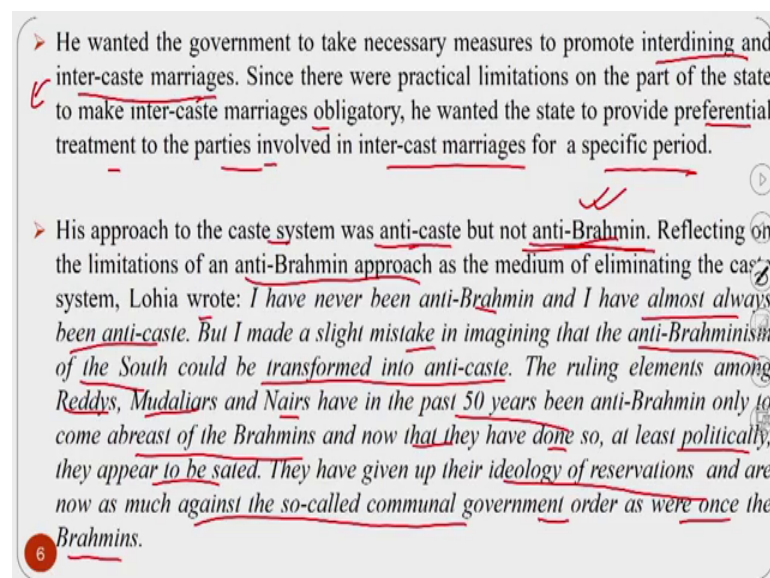
But the overall or the holistic approach in Lohia is somewhat which is missing. And we need to re-engage with such kind of politics Lohia when we argue about his stand for reservation, and why he is demanding that reservation, and overall objective for such a preferential treatment is to construct a society, which is more just and equal. So, this concentration of power in the hands of upper caste men according to Lohia had paralyzed this country. Therefore, he pushed for the entry of the depressed sections of

society or backward classes of society into public life and administration through preferential treatment and demanded therefore, 60 percent of reservation for the backward classes of society barring some specialized services; like surgery which requires specific expertise.

So, he preferred this reservation not as a tool of individual self is development, but as the means of social equality and advancement of national prosperity. So, that is the overall objective which he wanted to achieve. And in that sense we see a kind of democratic or democratic imaginaries in Lohia and his thought; where he wanted power to be diffused or decentralization of power and maximum participation of different sections especially from the backward classes, which is underrepresented or the over domination of a section of society on the administration on the public and the political.

Lohia was arguing against such kind of domination or concentration of power or exercise of power by that section that minority section over the large or the majority of the masses. So, his argument is more ok, can or should be seen more towards a kind of democratization of politics administration through representation or through adequate representation of different sections. And not just a kind of selfish individualistic and (Refer Time: 39:37) kind of things.

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So, to remove the cast barrier Lohia also argued for inter caste marriages or inter cast marriage as the basis for the creation of such society based on equality and justice. So, he

wanted the government to take necessary measures to promote interdining or inter caste marriages; which is very similar to Ambedkars kind of approach as we have discussed.

And since there were practical limitation on the part of a state to make inter caste marriage obligatory, he wanted the state to provide preferential treatment to the parties involved in inter caste marriages for a specific period. So, to eradicate the caste system or the inhuman inequalities produced and reproduced by the caste system he also championed cause of interdining are inter marriages. And he sort the role of state in providing or facilitating such marriages.

So, we can also find then his approach to the caste system who was not anti-Brahmin or anti-Brahminical (Refer Time: 40:45). So, often in the caste based politics or movement you see a kind of overall focus to root out or to attack the brahminical or the brahminical forces or the brahminical traditions or the intellectual works. Lohia is not someone who is arguing for fighting for anti-caste as a kind of anti - Brahminical stand.

So, reflecting on the limitation of anti-Brahmin approach as the medium of eliminating caste system Lohia writes and this he writes about the south Indian anti Brahminical movement. So, I never been anti-Brahmin, and I have almost always been anti caste. So, being anti caste is not equal to being anti-Brahmin. But I made a slight mistake in imagining that the anti Brahminism of the south could be transformed into anti caste in the rest part of the country.

So, the ruling elements among the Reddy's, Mudaliar's and Nair's have in the past 50 years been anti-Brahmin only to come abreast of the Brahmins, and now that they have done so at least politically they appear to be sated, they are satisfied with that thing. And they have given up their ideology of reservations and are now as much against the so called communal governments order as where once Brahmins. He saw the limitation in this kind of anti brahminical stand or movement where one group replaces the other, but the whole objective of such replacement is forgotten or betrayed once the other group acquire that power. And that does not help in destroying the caste system to begin with. And that was the major objective which Lohia is arguing about.

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Lohia on the interlinkages of caste and gender

- Lohia is among the few anti-caste thinkers who was able to draw the inter-relationship between caste and gender oppressions. And his articulation of 'backward classes', he included women of all castes as backward. And his emphasis on women question one can infer from the point that the equality between man and woman was the first and foremost principle of his *Sapt Kranti* [discussed later].
- He argued that Indian women (of depressed castes) is doubly subjugated by these two factors. He considered this double oppressions responsible for the decline of the spirit of India. He regarded gender discriminations and oppressions as the biggest impediment in the realization of an egalitarian society.
- In order to root out this double oppressions, Lohia focused on four key areas. These were: a)slavery of the kitchen and the field of sanitation; b)re-examination of the institution of marriage and the hypocrisies involved; c)equality in educational and property rights; and d)preferential treatment in politics and employment.

So, Lohia for him the eradication of caste in conclusion one can say requires the multifaceted approach. And there is a kind of inter relationship between other categories; we now discuss his view on caste and gender. So, Lohia is one among the few anti caste thinker; who was able to draw the interrelationship between caste and gender operations. His articulation of backward classes, he included women of all caste as backwards. And his emphasis on women question one can infer from the point that on the equality between men and women was the first and foremost principle of Sapt Kranti that he advocated, and we will discuss this notion of Sapt Kranti later.

So, as I was saying that the intersectionalist approach in him to understand different forms of operations or exploitation and the interrelationship between them, allow him to see the question of gender, as problem as perhaps is the cast. So, the women he considered as the part of backward class no matter what is their caste background. So, women from all caste backgrounds are part of backward class, because of there is a discrimination or exploitation on the basis of gender in all the castes groups in society. So, he argue that Indian women especially depressed castes is doubly subjugated by these 2 factors of caste and also gender.

He consider this double operations responsible for the decline of spirit of India or the public a spirit or the collectivities, where there is a adequate representation of different caste, but also the half of the population that is gender. So, he regarded gender

discrimination and oppression as the biggest impediment in the realization of an egalitarian society. And that is why he argued for main women in equality as the first and far most principle of his idea of Sapt Kranti or 7 revolutions. So, in order to root out this double oppressions, Lohia focused on the 4 key areas. And these are slavery of the kitchen and the field of sanitation, also the re-examination of institution of marriage and the hypocrisy that is involved in decision about marriage.

Equality in education and property rights, and also preferential treatment in politics and employment for the women. So, Lohia arguing about all these 4 4 areas to remove the gender inequalities or gender oppressions in Indian society and this he is doing in 1960's or 1950's that is something which is far ahead of his time. So, the tragedy is or the unfortunate part of it is, when we see the discourse or political scholarly debates and discussion on feminism or feminist movement in India, there is very less engagement with his thoughts and ideals of women question.

And he was also arguing for Indian tradition or there have been different movements in Indian tradition for eradication of caste and for the higher status of women or equally status of women in the public life and he sighted the examples of many women thinkers or legendary figures from the Indian past. So, drupadi or maithri or many bharti and many other examples he sites.

And so, with the cast oppressions and the cast question, he thought that Indian tradition and Indian culture has the potentiality to fight against such oppressions or discriminations.

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Lohia's views on the Indian ruling class

- While defining the ruling classes in India, Lohia adopted an inclusive approach composite of socio-cultural, political and economic factors. In his view, the ruling class in India can be defined by three distinct characteristics: high caste, English education and wealth. Presence of any two of these can provide an individual the entry to the ruling class.
- Here, he did not include women of any caste. He thought that women of all castes are exploited to certain extent that restricts their entry to the realm of ruling class.
- Throughout his life, through his politics and writings, Lohia tried to bridge this gap/divide between the ruling class or elite and the masses of Indian society. And his holistic approach and multifaceted struggles towards the intersection of caste, class, gender, language discriminations were aimed at creating a new socialist egalitarian society – guided by the principle of horizontal solidarity and twin principles of social equality and social justice.

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So now, if you look at his views on India's ruling class. So, while defining the ruling class in India, Lohia adopted an inclusive approach composite of socio cultural political and economic factors. So, in his views the ruling class in India can be defined or identified by 3 distinct characteristic. First high caste; second is English education and third is wealth. Now he considers that any individual which has any of the 2 criteria out of 3 he is part of the ruling class. So, presence of any two of these can provide individual the entry to the ruling class. So, either upper caste or English education or English education or wealth or in any formula the any of the 2 characteristic will allow the individual entry into the ruling class in India.

Here he did not include women of any caste as a arguing. So, women from all caste is part of backward classes according to Lohia's formulation of power relationship in society. So, he thought that women of all classes are exploited to certain extent that restrict their entry to the realm of ruling classes. So, throughout his life through his politics and writings, Lohia tried to bridge this gap or divide between the ruling classes or elite and the masses of Indian society.

And that gives us to reformulate perhaps the democratic imaginary in Lohia without reducing him merely as the spokesperson of the OBC or any particular groups. So, and his holistic approach and multifaceted struggles towards the intersection of caste, class, gender, language discriminations, were aimed at creating a new socialist egalitarian

society guided by the principle of horizontal solidarity in place of vertical solidarity based on caste wealth or education especially, English education and twin principle of social equality and social justice.

That is his overall holistic approach towards creating or reconstructing a society from a scratch which is based on this horizontal solidarity and principle of social equality and justice.

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Lohia's views on socialism

No greater disaster could befall socialism than if the historical peculiarities of its career in Europe were sought to be universalised and reproduced in the other two-thirds of the world.

- Lohia, Presidential Address to the Socialist Party's Panchmarhi Convention,

- Social equality and social justice were the cardinal principle of Lohia's politics and philosophy. To achieve that he argued that socialism was the only way forward. However, Lohia believed that for too long the doctrine of socialism strived on 'borrowed breath' and lagged behind the ideology of both communism and capitalism. From communism, it had taken up the economic aims such as planned economy, social ownership and mass production; and from capitalism it developed its general concerns of democracy, freedom and peace.
- Lohia argued for a distinct and innovative conceptualization of socialism independent from both communism or capitalism. In this connection his Presidential speech at socialist party convention in 1952 at Panchmarhi on the 'Doctrinal Foundations of Socialism' is regarded as one of the finest political speech in post-independent India. In this speech he criticized the prevailing ideological confusions in the socialist party oscillating between Nehruvian Congress and Communism. He charted out a new and independent vision of socialism in India. He was also very critical of democratic socialism and asserted that 'socialism stood for a distinct idea that needed no prefix or suffix'.

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Now briefly if you look at his views on socialism which is very distinct, and Lohia is more innovative and very original in his articulation of socialism for non-western societies; especially for India.

So, and one of the speech becomes the basis for such articulation and is also his work like Marx, Gandhi and socialism. He gave this redefinition or rearticulation of socialism in India in his presidential speech to the panchamarhi convention of the socialist party in 1952. And he is spoke there that no greater disasters could we fall socialism, then if the historical peculiarities of it is career in Europe were sought to be universalized and reproduce in the other 2 thirds of the world.

. So now, this is a kind of move away from eurocentrism in Lohia. And that is why Lohia becomes very fascinating or important figure to engage with to understand the specificities of different societies to understand their politics or to interpret their realities.

So, he in this speech we will discuss how he tried to innovatively reconstruct or reformulate the socialism for India on non-western society, and he was very critical against blind imitation of a ideology immersed in a peculiar condition of or the historical peculiarities in Europe, and then it tries to be universalised.

So, there is a kind of a belief in many progressive so called thinkers and intellectuals, let something that immersed in any part of the country will gradually spread different parts of the world, and it result in the betterment or transformation of society in (Refer Time: 51:25). Lohia was very critical of such kind of arguments about the blind imitations or following of an ideal which immersed in a particular historical specificities of a part of the humanity or the world.

So, Lohia was very critical of such kind of blind imitation. So, in his socialism the social equality and social justice where the cardinal principle of Lohia's politics and philosophy and to achieve that he argued that socialism was the only way forward to create a society to transfer a society which is based on the principle of social justice and social equality.

However, Lohia believe that for too long the doctrine of socialism is strived on borrowed breath. Borrowed breath is that historical experience in one society is tried to be replicated or reproduce in other society. So, he argued that for too long the doctrine of socialism is strived on the borrowed breath and lagged behind the ideology of both communism and capitalism. So, from communism socialism had taken the economic aims of planned economy or social ownership or mass production, and from capitalism it developed it is general concerns.

Say, democracy freedom and peace many people have this kind of blending in socialism, and when they talk about socialism they think of it is a kind of clear mixture of capitalism and communism that is blended together. Lohia argued for a distinct and innovative conceptualization of socialism independent from both communism and capitalism.

And in this connection his presidential speech at the socialist party convention in 1952 at panchmarhi on the doctrinal foundation of socialism, that becomes the basis of all his philosophy or politics in post independent India till his death in 1967; is regarded is one of the finest political speech in post independent India.

And in this speech he criticize the prevailing ideological confusion in socialist party, that oscillates between Nehruvian congress on the one hand and communist on the other. He charted out a new and independent vision of socialism in India, and he was very critical of the democratic socialism and asserted that socialism stood for a distinct idea that he did no prefix or suffix.

So, socialism was a kind of emerging force or a dominant not as dominant perhaps as say other ideological forces, but it had the promise of providing the alternative to the domination of the congress party or the congress rule. And Lohia was articulating about the possible method or the politics to achieve or to provide that alternative, which will help in the democratisation of state policy and society also.

Now to do that he wanted to have a kind of doctrinal clarity about the vision of socialism, which has for long relied upon the borrowed ideas such as communism or capitalism and the clear mixture of that. And also in India specifically between the Nehruvian congress, which is also tilted towards the socialism or socialist reconstruction of society, and this is also a point we need to recall that Nehru and Lohia was a close collaborator during the freedom struggle movements; within the congress they were involved in the freedom struggle and they shared a lot of ideas about reconstruction society or socialist ideals also.

So, this confusion Lohia believed is the major reason that obstruct the growth and the prospect of socialist party, which also lead to a kind of series differences with many other leaders; like J P or many other socialist leaders and split in the socialist party, but Lohia continue to practice his distinct understanding of socialism and socialism as a way forward for reconstruction of Indian society.

And he by and large succeeded enforcing that alignment of different forces, and he also and friend's artist, writers and literary figures and set their ideas in many ways. And in 1967 because of his premature death there is a kind of betrayal also of Lohia Lohia ideals, but he did provided organisational and ideological basis for these socialist movement and the socialist politics. And he therefore, criticize both the democratic socialism or Nehruvian socialism and also the communist ideas.

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➤ To realize his dream of socialism Lohia argued for a *Sapt Kranti* (Seven Revolutions): a) for equality between man and woman; b) against political, economic and spiritual inequality based on color or race; c) for the destruction of castes; d) against foreign domination and democratic world government; e) for economic equality, planned production and against private property; f) against interference in private life and for democratic method; and g) against arms and weapons and for *Satyagraha*.

➤ Lohia developed his idea of socialism with special reference to the third world countries. He stated that the economic aims proposed by both communism and capitalism is not applicable in these countries. Although differs in the means, both communism and capitalism urge for large scale production through the use of technology. It demands a huge amount of capital which is not possible for the underdeveloped countries of the third world.

➤ Therefore, these countries should develop their own method of socialism in accordance with the specificity of their context. Lohia himself proposed an alternative model of socialism which is decentralized in its nature: decentralized in terms of both in the use of technology and power.

So, to realise his dream of socialism Lohia argued from Sapt Kranti as I was referring to earlier.

The 7 revolution is the basis for the realisation of the socialism, and the first principle of that Kranti's equality between men and women against the political economic and spiritual inequality, based on colour or race, for the destruction of castes against foreign domination and democratic world government, for economic equality planned production and against private property, against interference in private life and for democratic method, and finally against arms and weapons and for satyagraha. So, there is a kind of overall articulation about how to reconstruct a socialist society by achieving these 7 revolution.

And that 7 revolution is for him a kind of simultaneous struggle. Not one after the other, but it should have a kind of holistic approach to reconstruct or transform the society. So, Lohia developed his idea of socialism with a special reference to the third world countries. And he stated that economic aims proposed by both communism and capitalism is not applicable in the society or countries, although differs in the means both communism and capitalism urges for large scale production through the use of technology.

And it demands a huge amount of capital which is not possible for the underdeveloped countries and third world. And other point is there is a less focus on the question of

labour alienation of labour the control of labour over its product. And the ownership is in capitalism with the individual the private citizen or in the communism with the state, but the structure of production or the mass production use of technology something which is very similar in both modes of production and he therefore, realise that it is not helpful in creating the socialist society in the third world society.

So, therefore, these countries should develop their own method of socialism in accordance with the specificities of their context. And Lohia himself proposed an alternative model of socialism which is decentralized in its nature. Decentralized in terms of both in the use of technology and power and that comes the next theme in Lohia which is also called Chaukhambha Raj, this is about kind of democratic imaginary in Lohia; where he talks about decentralization in technology by which he made the use of small scale machinery, and also decentralization of power which is represented in his idea of 4 pillar of state or Chaukhambha Raj.

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- By decentralization in technology he meant the use of small scale machinery. Decentralization of power is represented in his idea of a four pillar state (Chaukhambha Raj) constitutive of a) the village; b) the district; c) the province; and d) the center.
1 2 3
- He was not in favor of private property ownership. But he also thought that the exclusive ownership of property in the hands of the center is equally harmful. Therefore, he argued that property should be owned by all the four pillars of state and not to be concentrated in the hands of the center.
- Lohia advocated constructive action and peaceful non violent resistance even collective disobedience against exploitations and injustices. And he provided ideological and organizational basis for the realization of such ideals. However, much of his ideals remain unrealized or betrayed and even there has been, for long, a conspicuous silence about critically engaging with the ideas and writings of Lohia.

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Chaukhambha Raj in a Lohia is constituted of 4 layers of power or the ownership with the village, the district, the province and this center. So, these 4 layers are the way forward for the decentralization of power and ensuring maximum participation at different levels of governance. So, he was not in favour of private property, but he was also thought that the exclusive ownership of property in the hands of the centre is equally harmful, the so the concentration of wealth or the resources. And therefore, he argued

that property should be on by all these 4 pillars of a state, and not to be concentrated in the hands of the center.

So, there is a kind of democratization or decentralization of power and also technology in Lohia's understanding of Chaukhambha Raj or that allows to think about alternative imaginary of democracy state and society in Lohia. So, Lohia advocated constructive action and peaceful nonviolent resistance even collective disobedience against exploitation and injustice. So, against all form of violence he was very critical of and that is the Gandhian influence. And also in this Chaukhambha Raj as you see the influence of Gandhi in his idea about decentralization of power.

So, he provided the ideological and organisational basis of the realisation of such ideals as was a arguing. So, however, much of this ideals remain unrealised and betrayed even many of his followers and the political successor, and even there has been so long conspicuous silence, about critically engaging with the ideas and writings of Lohia and now, therefore, is the time to revisit some of his ideals writings to understand our society the challenges it is facing of different kinds and not having necessary to reduce or give priority to one form of exploitation or operation over the other.

So, there is a kind of holistic or inter sectionalist approach to reconstruct the society as a whole. And then to see it is role in the larger global politics, or it is global role. So, even in a contemporary times you find many scholars argue about one category and through that category they tries to interpret and explain India realty beat caste, class, gender, ethnicity religion, but in Lohia you will find a kind of interconnections or dynamic interrelationship as the basis to understand the matrix of power that operates at different level of Indian society and polity and then how to challenge how to confront such power dynamics that is there in the Lohia.

And one of the strong message that comes out of his approach is the democratization of all his fear of life; including strengthening or empowering the women or the backward classes. So, focus on the preferential treatment of backward class is used to reconstruct a society as a whole to make it more just an equal. And that is something which we can further develop or requires engagement with his writings.

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Resources

1. *The Caste System* by Rammanohar Lohia, Navahind Publications, 1964
2. *Marx, Gandhi and Socialism* by Rammanohar Lohia, 1963
3. 'Understanding Lohia's Political Sociology: Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Gender, and Language', by Anand Kumar, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.45, No.40, 2010
4. 'Recent Socialist Thought in India', by A. Appadorai, *The Review of Politics*, Vol.30 No.03, 1968
5. 'Lohia's Contribution to Socialist Politics in India', by Keshav Rao Jadhav *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.45, No.40, 2010
6. 'Context, Discourse and Vision of Lohia's Socialism', by Rajaram Tolpadi, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.45, No.40, 2010
7. Lohia's Socialism : An Underdog's Perspective', by Sachchidanand Sinha, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.45, No.40, 2010
8. Lohia's Quest for An Autonomous Socialism', by Adi H. Doctor, *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol.49, No.03, 1988

So, that is all on this lecture on caste class and socialism. And you can refer to some of these works like caste system or Marx, Gandhian Socialism by Rammanohar Lohia, and also Understanding Lohia's Political Sociology.

Intersectionality of Caste, Class, Gender and Language by Anand Kumar, and also by a Appadorai recent Socialist Thought in India, and some of these works like in Lohia's contribution to socialist politics in India by Keshav Rao and also Rajaram Tolpadi Context Discourse and Vision of Lohia Socialism and Lohia's socialism and Underdogs Prospective by Sachid Anand Sinha. And also Lohia's Quest for an Autonomous Socialism by Adi H Doctor, which you can refer to understand some of the themes we have discussed in this lecture. So, thank you for your listening, and that is all for today's lecture.

Thank you.