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Ram Manohar Lohia

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (23 March 1910 – 12 October 1967) was an activist in the Indian independence movement and a socialist political leader. During the last phase of British rule in India, he worked with the Congress Radio which was broadcast secretly from various places in Bombay until 1942.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was born on 23 March 1910 at Akbarpur, currently part of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. His mother died in 1912, when he was just two years old, and he was later brought up by his father Hiralal who never remarried. In 1918 he accompanied his father to Bombay where he completed his high school education. He attended the Banaras Hindu University to complete his intermediate course work after standing first in his school's matriculation examinations in 1927.



Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia contributed significantly to the formulation of an inter sectionalist approach for understanding the inequalities, exclusions and exploitations in the power system of India. This was highly significant for interrogating the dynamics of power as well

as the key determinants of the matrix of power - caste, class, gender and language. His perspective on the making of the Indian ruling classes and the power pyramid followed from an understanding of the linkages between these factors. Sadly, his model for building an egalitarian and prosperous social system through a set of interrelated socio-economic programmes, including preferential treatment of the backward sections, has found very few takers in its entirety. The most important aspect of Dr. Lohia was "decolonising", Empowering our Indian society to transcend the remnants of colonial mentality and rediscover the authentic essence of India, also to reform the rigid caste system which exists in Hindu society. He wanted to move the focus of the society beyond the dichotomy of legal and moral remedies inherited from the colonial era. It simultaneously "de-Westernised" the concept of class in the Indian discourse of power and social change.

Dr. Lohia was of the point of view about caste is a terrible curse to our country. There are many rungs in the caste system. Anyone who has wealth or belongs to one of the higher castes or knows English can prosper. But there are millions in this country who are not so fortunate. The Government should reserve sixty per cent of jobs for women and people belonging to backward communities. The same policy should apply to places in political life. This was the firm stand of Dr. Lohia. Equality of opportunity - this is a sound principle. But when people who have been oppressed for ages are asked to compete with people belonging to forward communities the latter are bound to succeed. Hence it is right that those who are backward should be given special opportunities. Dr. Lohia based all his programs on this doctrine.

From times immemorial there has been a gulf between profession and practice in India. Dr. Lohia stressed the need to bridge this gulf between word and deed. He never owned any property. Until he became a member of the Lok-Sabha he never had any income. His friends and well-wishers looked after him. His house in Delhi was always open to the party workers. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia returned to Lok Sabha from Kanooz constituency in 1967. In September 1967, he underwent an operation. But he never recovered from it. On the 12th of October 1967 Lohia breathed his last.

Dr. Lohia's thought on caste system:

Dr. Lohia states, to break this oppressive caste system, we will have to bring a new perspective of equality, where every human is same and there's no scope of oppression and injustice. Unless these so-called upper castes consciously bridge the gap between themselves and the so-called Shudras, their faults will continue and the country will also remain dead. All the reformist movements that have taken place till date have been swallowed up by the Sanatan Hindu system and the terrible swamp of casteism is so deep that no one knows where even the biggest stone goes into its womb. Unless this swamp is drained, casteism cannot be destroyed in India. When we think about why leadership does not emerge from the backward classes, we come to the conclusion that this huge community has become only a number and none of its people has any personality left. This is the biggest swamp of the Indian society in which every movement gets absorbed and disappears without even knowing, and the swamp remains.

There is a need for such leaders to emerge from the Shudras who are neither jealous nor submissive but who acquire humanity. The leader should be so deserving that not only the Shudras but also the upper castes will feel proud of him.

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