

# Social and political contribution of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia (23 March 1910 – 12 Oct. 1967)

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**Abstract:** Dr. Rammanohar Lohia holds a prominent place among socialist thinkers in India. He was a fierce propagator of socialist ideas. He made a significant contribution to the growth of the socialist movement. He was a true Gandhian and, as a true Gandhian, attempted to give Gandhism prominence in socialist thought. In the words of Sharad Omkar, "Lohia was a staunch supporter of Gandhiji's Satyagraha and non-violence, but considered Gandhism an incomplete philosophy. He was a socialist but considered Marxism one-sided. He was a nationalist but dreamed of a global world. He supported modernity but sought to transform modern civilization. He was a rebel and a revolutionary, but a true devotee of peace, truth, and non-violence."



Dr. Lohia was not only a politician but also a historian, economist, philosopher, sociologist, administrator, and a great writer. In the words of V.P. Verma, "Lohia played a crucial role during the freedom struggle, continuously nurturing the socialist movement in the country, and enriching Indian political thought."

**Introduction:** Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was born on March 23, 1910, in Shahjadpur, Akbarpur, Ambedkar Nagar. His father was Harilal and his mother was Chanda Devi. He was born into a Marwari, Maheshwari family. He lived an unmarried life. He met Jawaharlal Nehru in 1921. He passed his intermediate examination from BHU in 1927. He completed his bachelor's degree (B.A.) from Calcutta University in 1926. He received his doctorate from Berlin University, Germany. His research topic was "Salt Satyagrah-Gandhiji's Social and Economic Theory." He formed the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. In 1936, he formed the All India Congress Committee (AICC-1936) and began publishing the Congress Socialist Journal. He was imprisoned on 24 May 1936 and



was released the next day. In June 1940 he participated in the promotion of Gandhiji's paper Harijan. In 1942 Mahatma Gandhiji, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Aruna Asaf Ali, Adan Sheikh and Madiha joined Lohia ji in the Quit India movement. While giving the slogan of Do or Die, he was arrested in Bombay in May 1944 and sent to Lahore jail. Lohia Sagar Dam was built on the Paniyari river and he was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1967.

He was the President of the Congress Socialist Party in 1952. In 1953, the Asian Socialist Conference was held with his cooperation. In 1953 itself, he wrote a book called Equidistant Theory. In 1955, he formed a new socialist party. In 1967, as an alternative to the Congress, Lohia proposed the formation of coalition governments and coalition governments were formed in many states. This extraordinary man of history died on October 12, 1967. He went to jail 40 times in his lifetime.

Your major works and contributions as a thinker and writer are as follows:

(1) Himalayan Blunder

(ii) Wheel of History

(iii) Gandhi, Socialism & Marx

(iv) Guilty man of India's Partition

(v) Organization for Revolution: He edited the newspapers Mankind and Jan.

**Political and Social Thoughts** : The main political and social thoughts of Dr. Lohia are as follows:

(1) **The Cycle of History**: Dr. Lohia argued that history does not proceed in a straight line but rather follows a fixed cycle. This idea echoes the "cycle theory " of the renowned Greek thinker Sorokin.

(2) **Socialist Thought** : Lohia believed that both material and spiritual elements are essential for social development.

This is inclusive. Lohia was influenced by the German socialist movement. He believed that conflict occurs not only between humans but also between castes. Caste-based groups are fixed and traditional. Sometimes classes coalesce into castes, and castes coalesce into classes. He disagreed with the socialism of Western countries, attributing it to the rise of tendencies such as heavy industrialization, militant nationalism , authoritarianism , centralization, and extreme leftism. He advocated decentralized socialism, which aimed to develop small-scale industries powered by micro-machines, operate a cooperative-based economy, and promote rural governance. He opposed nationalization for its privatization and centralization of property, but emphasized the need for armed or bloody revolution, civil disobedience, and Satyagraha to achieve economic equality. He downplayed the importance of armed or bloody revolution, but instead emphasized Gandhi's principles of truth, nonviolence, civil disobedience , and Satyagraha to bring about socialism in the country. Lohia considered Marx a symbol of the West and Gandhiji a symbol of the East. Combining these two, he created Indian socialism, which incorporated three elements:



- (i) Nationalization of all industries and insurance companies.
- (ii) Improvement in the standard of living throughout the world
- (iii) Establishment of a World Parliament

Lohia's new socialism advocated the decentralization of economic and political power. Socialism could take practical form through cooperative labor and village governments. Lohia advocated for a greater incorporation of Gandhi's ideas into socialist thought and propounded the principle of a decentralized economy. Asian socialism lacks integrated social ideologies, policies, and programs. The country can be relieved of its various problems by establishing true socialism.

(3) **Thoughts on the State System:** According to Lohia, political system is not an end in itself. Exploitation and to remove injustice, one will have to resort to Satyagraha and civil disobedience. For state organisation, a four-tier system was suggested in which at the lowest level there would be village mandal, above that district, above that state or province and above that there would be units of the central government which would establish coordination between centralisation and decentralisation and welfare works would be accomplished.

(4) **Lohia's views on nationalism and internationalism:** Lohia reinterpreted history. He looked at the national and international political forces from new perspectives. He had an eternal desire to build a revolutionary national and international system. He was a supporter of peaceful means through which the unification of two nations could take place. Lohia ji, who dreamt of world citizenship, considered all humanity as one family. His wish was that the citizens of every country should be able to go to every country without any legal hindrance. There should be an institution of elected representatives in the World Parliament on the basis of adult franchise. He was an advocate of making Hindi the simple language instead of English.

(5) **Reflections on Programme and Principle (Theory of Saptakranti):** Distinction between Programme and Principle by eliminating these and implementing the resolutions, the universal principle could be given practical form. Lohia advised passing seven resolutions:

- Equality between men and women was accepted.
- Ending inequalities based on apartheid.
- Elimination of inequalities based on birth and caste.
- End of oppression by foreigners and creation of a world government.
- Opposition to economic inequality based on personal property and planned increase in production.
- Opposition to encroachment on individual rights. Opposition to war weapons and acceptance of the principle of civil disobedience.

The relevance and acceptability of the ideas of Dr. Lohia, the renowned socialist philosopher who shines like a pole star on the global horizon, is growing day by day in the current era of liberalization, privatization, and globalization. Poets wrote about Lohia: "Today, a forest was set across seven rivers, and someone wandered bewildered."



(6) **Opportunism and Revolution:** The ruling party is the root of opportunism. It promotes opportunism just as it promotes communalism. Communalism ruins the country, so the ruling party should stay away from it.

(7) Lohia, a devotee of Indian culture, gave a unique interpretation of ancient culture and history. He described Shiva as a symbol of beauty and self-sacrifice. In the modern era, he described Mahatma Gandhi as a descendant of the Ram tradition and Nehru as a representative of the Vashishtha caste.

Lohia Ji had a deep love for Indian culture. He transcended the European boundaries of socialism and national spirituality, developing a global vision. He demanded from Mother India: "Give us the mind of Vishnu, the heart of Krishna, and the diligent words of Ram. Give us the dignity of life, with a boundless mind and a keen heart." This is a personal demand of a world. In "Satyam Shivam Sundaram," Lohia Ji wanted to ensure that the ancient ideals and the modern world's tri-fold ideal of socialism, freedom, and non-violence could replace each other. This was his vision of the beautiful truth of human life. He dedicated his entire life to the happiness of others, sacrificing his own self for the sake of others, and was an immortal son of India and a true pioneer of a global vision of Indian culture. Lohia Ji's dream was that everyone should be healthy, happy, and that everyone should look after their own well-being. His fame will endure forever.

(8) **Supporting global freedom :** Lohia was a true supporter of democratic political freedom. Lohia believed that the areas of freedom of association, freedom to form communities, and freedom of personal life should be protected, and no government should forcibly interfere in them. He also supported Gandhian methods of individual and collective civil disobedience to protect the rights and dignity of ordinary people.

(9) **Supporter of a World Parliament:** To end global conflict, there should be a World Parliament. After the establishment of socialism, efforts should be made to establish a World Parliament. Lohia writes that a World Panchayat, elected on the basis of adult suffrage, should be formed, in which all countries should receive a share of one-fourth or one-fifth of the war budget. For this, he declared the World Panchayat possible through Satyagraha.

(10) **Support for decentralization:** He propounded the principle of decentralized economy. Communists instead of setting up big factories like the British, importance should be given to small machines, cottage and home industries, in which more and more people can get work with less capital. For socio-economic justice, he was in favour of giving economic power in the hands of the state, but autocratic rule was not acceptable at all and he wanted to establish four-pillar socialism by dividing the political-economic power at the country, provinces, district and village levels.

(11) **New Socialism:** Called classical socialism a thing of the past and proposed its place. He spoke of a new socialism. He included three elements: the nationalization of all industries, banks, and insurance companies, the improvement of living standards worldwide, and the establishment of a world parliament. Socialism could be realized through cooperative labor and village governments.



(12) Coordination of materialism and consciousness Lohia ji adopted Marx's concept of dialectical materialism.

It was accepted , but consciousness was given more importance in it. Lohia ji is in favor of creating such a theory under which the soul or common objectives should have such a mutual relationship that both can maintain their independent existence. His materialism was transformed into consciousnessism. He said that "such an intellectual machine should be created , which can establish an independent relationship between the soul and common objectives.

(13) Concept of caste and class struggle: History shows the struggle between castes. This internal conflict (turmoil) between them provides dynamism in history. The form of castes is fixed, whereas the internal structure of classes is loose. Castes often exhibit stagnation and inactivity, whereas classes represent the intense forces of social mobility. Castes became loose and divided into classes, and classes organized and took the form of castes.

(14) Economic Considerations: Both abundance of wealth and its equitable distribution are essential. To limit expenditure and ensure that industries that are the means of abundant production are under social control, i.e., state funding. Control to raise funds, industrialization to increase production, and nationalization for equitable distribution are the primary economic policy dimensions .

**Relevance and evaluation of Dr. Lohia (Indian freedom fighter & social-economic political thinker) :-**

As a socialist intellectual, Lohia practiced profound thought and contemplation. He bore the indelible imprint of Gandhian thought and was a passionate proponent of socialist ideology. He was a renowned freedom fighter not only in India but globally , a true Gandhian thinker , a dedicated socialist leader , a realist, and a pillar of the socialist movement. He desired to establish decentralized socialism to improve the conditions of farmers and villages. He desired the coordinated use of religion and politics. According to him, without politics, religion becomes lifeless, and without religion, politics faces crisis. He called religion "long-term politics" and politics "short-term religion." The importance of truth was crucial for social order. He considered deceit, laziness, lack of devotion , and inefficiency as obstacles to social progress and social justice. He disagreed with the Gandhian ideology of eliminating violence from action , speech , and mind. He accepted the principle of non-violence. His entire life was spent fighting for the socio-economic rights of the downtrodden , the exploited , the oppressed and the poor. He considered English a symbol of slavery and wanted to make Hindi a national link. His ideas on border security and internal security , unemployment , inflation , Ganga pollution control , coordination of religion and politics , reducing the gap between rich and poor , neglect of women in a male-dominated society and its consequences , social evils , saving the Himalayas , providing work to the unemployed , providing unemployment allowance , special opportunities for the upliftment of the downtrodden , the exploited , the poor and the oppressed , the backward classes and women, developing a religious harmony mindset , establishing cordial relations between Hindus and Muslims, etc. are meaningful and relevant. He said for Muslims that Ghazni , Ghoris and Babars were not their ancestors but invaders. He said for Hindus



that Razia , Jayasi , Raskhan, Kabir etc. were not Muslims but our ancestors. He was a staunch supporter of Gandhiji's Satyagraha and non-violence , but considered Gandhism to be an incomplete philosophy. He was a socialist , but considered Marx to be one-sided. He was a nationalist, but dreamed of a world government. He was the most modern, but kept trying to change the modern civilization. He was a rebel and a revolutionary, but was a unique worshipper of peace and non-violence.

Your heart was devoid of any ambition, and you were constantly eager to knock on the doors of tradition, status quo, and exploitation. A life of simplicity, carefreeness, and joy, a struggle against injustice, opposition to wrong policies , and celibacy were integral to your personality. By following your path, we can show the Dalits, the exploited, and India's 1.21 billion ordinary people a day of happiness and prosperity.

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