

P R E F A C E

The present dissertation work would seek to explain, analyses and depict the ideas, conceptions and orientations of Jawaharlal Nehru, Rammanohar Lohia and Asoke Mehta regarding socialism, social justice, individual freedom and democratic thought. All the three notable thinkers mentioned above were influenced and impressed by socialism and Marxism and wanted to infuse and instil socialist ideas into the Indian soil. But the ideas, visions and assertions of the three thinkers have different characters and nuances. The role and contribution of Nehru, Lohia and Mehta in imparting and rousing consciousness regarding socialistic ideas and thoughts among the Indian masses have been discussed and analysed in the background of socialist movement in India in a comparative discussion a great statesman, who related his vision to social action for the regeneration and regimentation of Indian society.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a great nationalist leader, a revolutionary and a thinker. During the nationalist movement Nehru gradually assumed a status in the Indian political scene which was next only to that of Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru was profoundly influenced by Marxism, Scientific Socialism and the Russian revolution. As such many of his writings and speeches and some of the policies, he pursued, reveal a distinct impact of these ideas and events on him. His primary concern was the national liberation and establishment of socialism also got utmost importance.

Nehru propagated socialist ideas in India. Nehru made a profound impression on the Indian intelligentsia by saying at the annual session of the congress at Lucknow in 1936 : "I am convinced that the only key to the solution of the world's problems and of India's problems lie in socialism, and when I use this word, I do so not in a vague humanitarian way but in the scientific, economic sense I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and the subjection of the Indian people except through socialism. In short it means a new civilization radically different from the present."

Nehru was a liberal who was tremendously influenced by Marxism. He opposed communalism and regionalism and tried to maintain national unity. He was against obscurantism and he stood for a scientific approach. He was an advocate of secularism.

Nehru gave a positive lead in spreading socialist ideas and he strove hard in reconstructing Indian society on the basis of the liberal and scientific culture of the West. Nehru was the socialist theoretician of the most well organized conservative party of India. He preached socialism but never developed a socialist cadre or a socialist group within the party. Above all, Nehru can be credited with the establishment of a strong democratic tradition in India.

His political theory is essentially eclectic, drawn from the diverse intellectual currents of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nehru could set the tone for modernizing India and making the people of the country aware of the fact that they are a part of one world-politically, economically and culturally.

M. Chalapathi Rai says that Nehru did not think that any sectarian Socialism would suit Indian conditions or that socialism would come about overnight. He believed that it had to be an open movement, broad-based, and would depend on the mobilization of social forces. Socialism has come to India under his leadership more as a grand idea than as a strategy for social change. Very few statesman in the twentieth century attained his influence and stature.

Rammanohar Lohia is one of the most powerful and outstanding socialist leaders in India. His role and contribution about the socialist movement are great and remarkable. His ideas and thinking on Marxism, socialism, social justice, equality, freedom and democracy bear a distinctive stamp of his towering personality. Though Lohia was influenced by Marxism and Gandhian ideals and principles, yet his ideas and thought-processes are distinct and bold. He could not unquestioningly follow or emulate Marxian tenets or Gandhian principles. He wanted to assimilate Marxism, Gandhism and his own distinct 'Indian brand of Socialism' which could be congenial and conducive for the Indian atmosphere and the masses.

He denounced the idea to follow blindly any foreign creed or dogma. He wanted to take the positive and good postulates of Marxism and Gandhism and carve out an independent niche to suit Indian conditions and circumstances. He wanted to usher in a 'New Civilisation' where equality and individual freedom would thrive and favouritism and corruption would be eliminated. Lohia was opposed to both capitalism and communism. He says : "Socialism is a newer doctrine than capitalism or communism... But the career of socialism is impeded most by its inability to secure a doctrinal foundation." He says further : "Socialism should cease to live on borrowed breath... To explore once again the economic and the general aims of society and to integrate them into a harmony should be a high endeavour of socialist doctrine."

Lohia pleaded for small unit technology as he opposed heavy industrialisation, Lohia's doctrine of 'four-pillar State' advocated decentralisation and dispersal of power and authority. He was also an advocate of decentralised planning.

Lohia's social ideas are important and remarkable. He gave utmost importance to democratic values and ethos. He wanted to root out caste disparities and oppression of the lower castes by the higher castes, He sought to uplift the conditions of the poor and downtrodden. He condemned the elitist approach of the bureaucracy and the domination of the people belonging to higher stratus to the lower ones. He sincerely wanted to uplift the conditions of women in society. To cleanse the society from ills and evils he stressed emphasis on social and economic reforms.

Asoke Mehta should be remembered as a democratic socialist an exponent of democratic planning in India. As a member of the CSP. Mehta worked hard to infuse and disseminate socialist ideas and conceptions among the Indian masses. But it should be mentioned that Mehta denounced Marxism. Mehta was in favour of liberal democracy. Mehta deprecated violent methods, purges and regimentation to usher in socialism. He advocated for social and economic reforms. Mehta had love and inclination towards democracy, parliamentary prin-

principles and values. He maintained that equality and individual freedom are essential features of a democratic society.

Mehta was an economist and wanted to strengthen Indian economy by removing the impediments and fetters of development. To raise the standard of living of the Indian people Mehta stressed emphasis on democratic planning. Next to Nehru, the most important contribution of Mehta may be mentioned as economic planning.

This dissertation work has been analysed and discussed in eight chapters. The first chapter deals with the theoretical perspective and the meaning and implications of Socialism and Social Justice. The second chapter discusses and analyses the history of Indian Thinking on Socialism. The third and fourth chapters deal with Jawaharlal Nehru's ideas on Socialism and Social Justice and his Economic ideas and principles. The fifth chapter analyses Lohia's ideas and thinking on socialism and social justice. The sixth chapter deals with the ideas and thought-patterns of Mehta on Socialism and Social Justice. The seventh chapter deals with the comparative discussion of the ideas, conceptions and thought-processes of Nehru, Lohia, and Asoke Mehta on Socialism, Social Justice, Equality, Freedom, Democracy, Industrialisation and other related issues. Eight chapter deals with the concluding observations on this dissertation work. Lastly, a select bibliography has been added.