



MADHU LIMAYE'S VIEWS ON SOCIALISM

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ABSTRACT :

Madhu Limaye was a leading personality among modern socialist leaders. Limaye was socialist but he was not the follower of Marx. He had no faith in rigid Marxism. The Marxian concept of dialectical materialism never appealed Limaye. He has realized that Marxian materialistic interpretation of History is useful concept provided that is not applied dogmatically. Socialism according o Limaye undoubtedly presents bewildering variety of forms and doctrines, and this alas is not necessarily an index of its vitality for analysis. In a discussion of socialism, Limaye feels the central problem is of the social change. The problem of social change is acute in the undeveloped countries where the primary task of organizing and creating the productive forces is yet to be performed. Limaye also fought for the equal status of women in every walk of life. We can see that Limaye's Socialism also included social reforms.



KEYWORDS : *Socialism; Marxist classics; Marxism; totalitarianism.*

INTRODUCTION

Madhu Limaye (1922-1995) was a leading personality among modern socialist leaders. This scholar politician's personality was extra-ordinary. He was a man of great intelligence, honesty and intrepid patriotism. His works and creations have been the source of inspiration to the young generation. Limaye, a man of magnified talents, has earned a niche in the political sphere as an upholder of certain principles, a challenger of politics of state quorums and theoretician. He does not spin his political formulations in ivory towers but in his day to day struggle for the neglected souls of country. Hence in his thinking, he is empirical and not dogmatic.

OBJECTIVE(S):

➤ This paper describes and analyses Madhu Limaye's views on Socialism.

Madhu Limaye's perception of socialism was not based on the rigid obedience to the doctrine of Karl Marx. He was a socialist but he was not the follower of Marx. He has no faith in rigid Marxism. He does not subscribe to Marxism as a comprehensive system or as the embodiment of final truth. He looks upon Marx as a man of genius, who while profoundly influenced by his environment, possessed the penetrating insight to discern the deeper underlying tendencies of contemporary bourgeois epoch and indicated the probable direction. His contention is that our approach to Marxism should be based on experience of facts and not on the notions borrowed from the books written a hundred years ago.

In his reply to Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali in 1951, Limaye said, "Fourteen years ago when we first read the Marxist classics, we felt that a revelation has come to us, that we have found the secret of the universe and that everything is now clear as daylight, the dark corners which were hitherto inaccessible to us seemed suddenly illuminated and we thought that we have at least hit upon a method of social analysis which will solve all the difficulties for us. But many years have passed since and the old scriptures do not enthuse to us to same extent. There has been disillusionment, and we have now realized that it is not as simple as that the struggle for clarity has to be continuously fought and won, that last word has not been said in the matter of theory and that we have to reexamine our postulates conclusions, and that we have to constantly revised and enrich our theory in the light of new facts, new knowledge and new experiences."

The Marxian concept of dialectical materialism never appealed Limaye. He has realized that Marxian materialistic interpretation of History is useful concept provided it is not applied dogmatically. The socialists according to Limaye do not believe in the monastic view of history. The view that economic struggle is the primary agent in the Historical process and that the economic conditions are ultimate determining factor. The Study of history reveals a varied pattern: in different factors seem to be dominant and a pluralistic interpretation of historical and contemporary events becomes inevitable.

The Marxist theory of classes is also not valid for him provided it is modified in the light of Indian caste system. He criticized traditional Marxist for their failure to ignore distinction between class society and caste society.

Limaye also opposed the concept of violent revolution. He condemned those groups and movements who extol and glorify violence as it would lead to centralization of power and debasement of the people.

In spite of inadequacies and defects in the Marxian tenets, Limaye has always looked upon Marxian scientific thinking par with excellence. He was confident that if the scientific spirit of Marx and Engels is adopted in true sense, it would prove useful even now. "It would provide a key to the understanding of the problems of the contemporary world including the communist controlled part." In his article published in Telegraph he wrote, "to the extent it is scientific it can and must be applied to the development that have taken place in all parts of the world. Hundred years after the death of Marx, the world seems to be divided into three parts, two developed parts and one underdeveloped. On the one hand are North America Western Europe Australia and Japan that is the capitalist world, and the vast contiguous Eurasian land mass where the centrally planned economies, claiming the legacy of Marx, hold sway. On other hand is the one half of the human race belonging to third and fourth worlds at the lowest level of economic development and steeped in unspeakable poverty."

Limaye wanted the scientific method of analysis must explain development in all the three sections. However he favors, to ensure the steady of economic progress and prosperity of all the three worlds and an international economic order, where return to labour around the world would be approximately equal.

Socialism according to Limaye undoubtedly presents bewildering variety of forms and doctrines, and this alas is not necessarily an index of its vitality for analysis. Limaye has classified the different varieties of socialism into two broad sections.

1. The traditional socialism of Western Europe including the cognate socialism in Asia at one end and welfare statist in advanced industrial countries of west.
2. The communist parties and states headed by USSR.

While the first group adheres to representative institutions and relies chiefly on universal suffrage for enacting welfare measures and ultimately transforming the basis of society, the second group believes forcible overthrow of the existing institutions, the creation of one-party state and introduction of centralized economy. Unfortunately the socialists and communists of Asia have become pitfall followers of Traditional socialism or muscovite communism.

The experience and ideas of both these groups are completely irrelevant to nearly two thirds of mankind to which India definitely belongs. One peculiar feature of Asian socialism, according to Limaye is

that socialism and vague radicalism in these countries were initially nurtured by the freedom movement and had impact of Russian revolution and Marxism although no organizational alliance was developed with Moscow. But partly because of anti-national behaviour of local communism and partly because of its inherent weakness and lack of originality, 'the mind of office', socialism and progressive nationalism soon become captivated by the socialists and liberal west.

Like Lohia, Limaye also belong to that school of socialists who neither owe allegiance to any external ideological deity, nor is the follower of dogmas. Limaye insisted that in India the Concept of socialism must acquire its own face, instead of depending on traditional socialism as advocated by socialist and communist world.

Limaye has always been critical of Congress brand of socialism which has made the confusion worse confounded. Limaye once called socialism preached by Indira Gandhi and her mates as "Bogus socialism or Maruti Socialism." In India except one or two groups everyone subscribes to the goal of socialism as the objective of economic planning. In reality general acceptance of socialism has not brought any clarity in the definitions of its contours. This general acceptance of socialism in a vague kind of way comes in path of the clear translation of the goal into a concrete programme.

The tragedy according to Limaye is that socialism has come to align itself with economic doctrine alone. To some socialism means only an extension of public sector. Even though cultural and ethical aspects are totally ignored under socialism the public has no clear notion of the economic programme of socialism and the structural changes that it entitles- remarks Limaye.

Limaye felt that although, "Public ownership of the means of production constitutes an essential element in socialism, no government becomes socialist merely because certain industries happen to be public sector and that plans are to be formulated for starting a few more."

Regarding a clear concept of socialism in India Limaye remarks- "Indian socialism should not, however confine itself to economics alone and leave economic determinism to socialism. It must restore to the national tongues, their rightful position, foster the national language and give the languages of India a common spirit. Destruction of caste system alone will give substance to the idea of national unity. It must recover the territory occupied by Chinese and liberate the remaining foreign pockets on our soil and even hope to induce the Pakistani provinces which have seceded from India to reunite with their motherland."

Having unflinching faith in democracy the concept of a totalitarian or one party state has never appealed to Limaye. Limaye observed "Socialism is not synonymous to state ownership of the means of the Production. There must be decentralization of Political and economic power. In fact the concentration of all economic powers in the hands of the state and state being the monopoly of an authoritarian party would mean a complete fusion of political and economic power with results disastrous and unprecedented in history."

Criticizing the communist of totalitarianism as negation to Marxian approach Limaye remarked, "Marx had visualized a rapid withering away of the state immediately after the abolition of capitalist relations. But having murdered liberty decentralized initiatives of the mass and multi party democracy the Russians ended up by proclaiming the monstrous Stalinist doctrine of the highest concentration of state power as a pre-condition of eventual disappearance."

Limaye believed in democratic methods but democratic methods are not consistent with constitutions. They naturally include elections and parliamentary actions but they are something more than that. Strikes civil resistance, building up of class organization, constructive work etc is as much democratic as work inside the legislature.

In any discussion of socialism, Limaye feels the central problem is of the social change. The problem of social change is acute in the underdeveloped countries where the primary task of organizing and creating the productive forces is yet to be performed. Hoary traditions, superstitions, illiteracy, unemployment and caste system cannot be easily removed. He felt that caste system has divided the Indian society into many groups with great differences. It has become barrier for social harmony and political peace. According to Limaye socialism and democracy cannot function without removing the barrier of caste system. He waged

war against the caste system on both political and social fronts in order to end the existing system. On the policy of reservation he was very clear that reservation should not be a goal but should be an instrument of social justice. He wrote, "The decision of National Front Government to reserve 27 percent of the posts in central government services has been the occasion for the launching of vicious and destructive campaign. The upper castes which control the newspapers, radio and television have been fore front in this campaign. They have deliberately fostered an atmosphere of frenzy in which self-immolations and murders as self immolation are being encouraged."

To Limaye opposing reservation policy is not just; reservation is the only way which can bring scheduled castes and other backward classes to the main stream of country's life.

Madhu Limaye has given his view on reservation in following words:

"I shall now spell here the outline of proper reservation policy. First is collection of statistics, second preparation of comprehensive central list applicable to the whole country and its periodical review. The discontinuation of caste enumeration in the census has given rise to unsupported claims by some castes and equally wild counter claims by privileged minority. Economic criteria can be applied only to those castes which after the exhaustive enumeration and survey are found to be more educationally advanced than the national average and the ration of whose representation is nearly equal to their proportion in population. Only by introducing the scientific test of continuing data collections and its analysis, desired goal of justice can be achieved."

Limaye also fought for the equal status of women in every walk of life. Any society cannot develop if women are not given equal opportunity. In our society different standards are adopted to judge individual conduct of men and women. Limaye opposed this. He was against the giving and taking of dowry. He opposed any kind of cruelty against women. The economic freedom should be provided to women and this can be done only through proper education.

Thus, we can see that Limaye's socialism also included social reforms. To Limaye socialism means the ascendancy of rationality, the victory of scientific outlook over irrationality and superstitions. All this can be brought by revolutionary change in social and political system. Madhu Limaye raises a question, "Can it be brought about quickly and peacefully before the forces of disintegration and mounting social tensions swamp our country? Socialism must never cease to strive and hope for success. But will the democratic institution survive the actual strain of transition? Free speech and periodic elections based on universal suffrage are the salt of democracy and socialism cannot abolish them.

Limaye felt that these tasks (social and political Change) are urgent and if peaceful socialism cannot accomplish then a violent dictatorship may arise in our midst and carry them out in its own distorted manner.

According to Limaye in such conditions other more harmful possibilities also exist. They are of slow disintegration, of foreign aggression and of military coup. To Limaye socialism was not limited to political and economic spheres it also included society. Though Marxian socialism has shown the world a way to establish a just society, it cannot be implemented in all countries blindly. The needs environment and social context of nations differs socialism must be flexible to change itself accordingly.

Limaye had abiding faith in democracy and freedom. He did not believe in the automatic development of socialism. He favored the idea of socialization of the means of production. According to Limaye the aim of socialism is to bring prosperity and equality. Limaye's views on socialism were shaped not only by reading socialist literature but also by his active participation in socialist movement. He presented and practiced socialism which was suitable for India and Indians.

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