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Lohia and Feministic Outlooks

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Abstract---Lohia's writing specifically about women, indeed, is very little. But it is equally true that this does not impede our perception of understanding and discussion of women in Lohia's writings. Lohia's views about women may be elicited from two main sources for discussion. The first one is from his thoughts about freedom and equality. And the other one is by discussing his views about Draupadi. The four dimensions identified by Lohia are: External, Internal, Worldly and Spiritual (These may be perceived both as aspects of process and parameters of equality). Lohia recognizes that the major obstacle the struggle for equality is faced with is the importance gained by the external and worldly aspects not received by the internal dimension and the spiritual aspects. Equality in its true sense may be accepted only when all these four aspects are achieved, says Lohia.

Keywords---equality, feminist, freedom and equality, Indian language, women.

Introduction

This very title is bizarre and curious. Lohia's writing specifically about women, indeed, is very little. But it is equally true that this does not impede our perception of understanding and discussion of women in Lohia's writings. The question of woman is an integral part of his perceptions and thoughts. This appears to be a significant issue not to be overlooked. Few deserve this attribute even globally. If asked about the essence of his thoughts, the answer by the majority, I am sure, will be 'propounding human dignity'. It is equally important that he does not propound human dignity as the gymnastics of a deterministic and skilled yogi. His evergreen human love liberates Lohia's writings and thoughts from the drabness and inertness of the intellect, logic and ideologies keeping them ever vibrant. I have no hesitation to utter these words, sentimental as they make look (Gowda, 2010; Lorber & Farrell, 1991). (If not Lohia, about who else should one be sentimental?).

Lohia's views about women may be elicited from two main sources for discussion. The first one is from his thoughts about freedom and equality. And the other one is by discussing his views about Draupadi. Lohia's article, 'The meaning of equality' is a significant text in point. Lohia has discussed in this the structure of the process of movement for equality and the fundamental issues to recognize equality (Kulshreshtha & Nūpura, 1993). It has considered all the down-trodden equally. Lohia brings under the purview of his discussion not only those recognized to be downtrodden, those who have agreed to be down trodden but even those who have not been acknowledged to be down trodden, assuming their inclusion. He does this by identifying the characteristics of equality. The four dimensions identified by Lohia are: External, Internal, Worldly and Spiritual (These may be perceived both as aspects of process and parameters of equality) (Subbanna, 2001).

Lohia recognizes that the major obstacle the struggle for equality is faced with is the importance gained by the external and worldly aspects not received by the internal dimension and the spiritual aspects (Tripathi, 2008). Equality in its true sense may be accepted only when all these four aspects are achieved, says Lohia. He says at this stage that only an 'Indian language' has a unique world-concept and identifies it as 'Samatva'. While saying that perhaps there is no possibility of languages other than Indian languages containing the possible meanings that 'Samatva' connotes, Lohia seems to have in his mind the spiritual and internal dimensions that Samatva carries. If this is applied specifically to the issue of women, both these aspects, it appears, about woman's understanding of the self should undergo a change. Lohia's words that the process of equality is not achieved merely through the external dimension and the institutional support and even if it gives one the impression of having been achieved, it is temporary as well as illusory, are true, at least with regard to women's movements (Faulkner, 2001; Lindert & Williamson, 1985).

Women's movement of today has realized that a change can be permanent only when it can realize its internal dimension and the spiritual facet. Lohia's concerns for women and Dalit's and his uncanny intellectual acumen which deserve to be called farsightedness are comprehensible when it is observed that today's women's movements which had so far considered 'the acceptance of the world' to have changed, are now moving towards 'self-awareness' that has to change. Above all, Lohia has a clear perception of both the distress and zeal of this process of change. He also says that this cannot be achieved without the agony of awareness (Feigenson, 2007; Twigg, 2004).

The essay 'Beauty and Complexion' has interesting insights against this background. The major cultural discourses have already been sufficiently discussed. A pure cultural and political question like beauty and complexion has expanded into a discourse of woman's entity too (Tripathi, 2007). Establishing the origin of Draupadi's beauty in the beauty of the soul (personality) Lohia recognizes the dignity of the spirit as the Centre of the beauty of the soul. Draupadi's personality has been so far viewed on various female models. If one of them is apparently being a strong personality, she struggles within in helplessness and longing for dependence on male strength, the other is the subtle strategies she utilizes to conquer the challenges of life and projecting them as

helplessness to the world's eye. Both of these interpretations have kept the patriarchal system as their contenders (Verme, 2009; Unterhalter, 2005).

But Lohia treads an entirely different path where patriarchy does not appear to be a contender. There is no attempt at joining hands with it either. Instead, an extraordinary dimension that the life and personality of a woman who has unshakable trust in her own dignity are absolutely natural. Draupadi seems to satisfy all the requirements of 'Samatva' of Lohia's perception. Both inner dimension and spiritual element mentioned by Lohia are present in her in abundance (Jothilakshmi et al., 2012; Kumar et al., 2015). That is how she attains authenticity and honour for her personality, effortlessly, as it were. True, Krishna is her prop in the external and worldly elements she needs. But her inner and spiritual elements emerge entirely out of Draupadi's wish and effort. Lohia's emphasis, naturally, is on this side. I feel it significant that Lohia liberates Draupadi from the 'bond of time' and personality of 'accusation' and interprets her as a personality coveted by all classes and women of all times. In another speech, addressing the western ladies before him, Lohia said western women are like queens without observing the presence of Indian women there. Lohia who had the presence of mind said instantly that Indian women are like angels. I trust that Lohia had the ability to see woman as a queen as well as an angel (Burger, 2002; Sangi-Haghpheykar & Poindexter, 1995).

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