

## Chapter: 4

# Theoretical Counters on Trusteeship

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### Introduction

This chapter deals with theories and concepts of Trusteeship, Corporate Social Responsibility and Peace. Trusteeship, CSR and peace are three pillars of the study. All three have been deliberated upon in details. An effort has been made to interlink these concepts. The ultimate objective of peace in the society through CSR on the principle of Trusteeship has been kept in mind throughout the deliberations. The foundation material on these concepts and their interlinking would help in correct understanding of the concepts which are prerequisites for proper analysis of case studies.

When Gandhiji brought the idea of Trusteeship, he was ridiculed for it but Gandhiji was confident and he believed that Trusteeship theory would survive all other theories as it had the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. According to him, no other theory was compatible with nonviolence.

### Trusteeship and Power

The concept of Trusteeship flows from the ideals of aparigraha and ahimsa. Gandhiji's idea of Trusteeship originated from his unique and revolutionary approach to the phenomenon of power. Aparigraha and Ahimsa are ethical ideals but power is a social phenomenon. Bertrand <sup>10</sup> Russel described power as 'the fundamental concept in social science'.

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<sup>10</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Power* (George Allen and Unwin), p.9

There has been quest for power throughout the history of human being. The people fought war for grabbing power. Kingdoms were defeated and won as there was quest for Power. However, Gandhiji was against the 'capture of power'. He did not believe in capture of power by a few as it would bring no justice to the people. Instead he advocated for accrual of power to many. He advocated for Trusteeship as a means to achieve 'Accrual of power' to many. Therefore, Gandhiji had a broad meaning of Trusteeship and he wanted this concept to be propagated for changing the very concept of power. Gandhiji viewed 'power' as a problem. Gandhiji wanted 'Power' to be freed from obsession with domination and coercion. He wanted 'power' to be related to promotion of self restraint along with initiation and mobilization of collective action in pursuit of social objective. So, for Gandhiji, Trusteeship was an answer to the problem of Power and Inequity.

Power grows if a) there is centralization of it in few hands, b) the people who are in power, do not believe in sharing things with other and c) the people on which power is exercised, are not ready to resist the atrocities which they suffer.

Power has to be tamed and transformed by a) minimizing concentration (it must not lie in few hands), b) fostering an attitude of trusteeship in those who hold power, and c) maximizing the readiness and ability to resist the abuse of power. The means of achieving it is 1) decentralization, 2) trusteeship, and 3) Satyagraha.

Power must be backed by ethical ideals of Ahimsa and Aparigraha which teaches exercise of restraint. Ethical norms or principles are not meant for exclusively those who seek salvation but they relate to man's conduct in society. So, these ethical principles are not meant for personal life of

individual only and have relevance to the lives of aggregate/society. What is good for the part of the body, has to be good for the whole body.

## Trusteeship and Aparigraha

Aparigraha is the ethical ideal of non-possession<sup>11</sup>. It means renunciation of ownership voluntarily. Isopanishad exhorts – Enjoy by renouncing, do not cling to possessions, whose is wealth?

The above words are not for only those who want salvation. These words apply to those people, too, who are tempted by material wealth/gains. These words guide people through the zones of conflict in society. These words describe relationship of men with objects. Man should use these objects but must not get obsessed with these objects. There is no problem with the object, problem lies in obsession (aasakti) which creates greed and weakens the man. Due to obsession, people want more and more of things irrespective of their needs. One section of the society has collected the things which are much more than is required to satisfy their present needs and on the other hand, there is section of people who are starving and they do not have their basic requirements taken care of. Such situation creates conflicts in the society. Conflicts result into disharmony and unrest and there is chaos and peace is disturbed. There is tendency to grab/capture the power to collect more and more and society is put into war mode. There is class struggle resulting into hatred, violence and blood. Whole fabric of the society gets broken.

Gandhiji advocated for a code of conduct for the individual and society. The individual should abstain from acquisitiveness and possessions. Since body itself is a possession so absolute non-possession cannot be practiced. As long as body is there, absolute non-possession is not a

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<sup>11</sup> M.K, Gandhi, from Yeravda Mandir (Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad), September, 1931

possibility. However, one must examine each and every desire/need that leads to possessions very carefully. He must concentrate on the things which are essential and must get rid of things which are not essential. One needs a house to live in, but must not desire for a house costing millions of rupees when his needs can be taken care of, in few thousands/lakhs. So, one must distinguish between needs and wants. One must reduce one's wants to barest minimum.

The thought of obsession is dangerous. People (with thought of obsession) confuse civilization with multiplication of wants. Thought of obsession takes away one's peace of mind. Society with such people becomes place for unrest.

Possession means 'retention for future use' which in turn creates power struggle as one will be able to retain his possession only if he is able to defend it. One will not be able to defend one's possessions unless he uses force himself or he is dependent on force of others. Therefore a person who believes in non-violence, will have to opt for the path of non-possession.

Accumulation of things is against the Fundamental Law of Nature. Nature creates neither more or less. If X tonnes of rice is needed to take care of the surviving human beings and other living ones on this earth at time T, God would make sure that this amount of rice is present on this earth at that moment. So, as per this law, none should be hungry. But, there is starvation on this earth. People are unable to have two meals a day. The reason is – Principle of Apathya is not being followed. Therefore, whoever appropriates more than the minimum is guilty of theft<sup>12</sup> as per Gandhi.

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<sup>12</sup> *Harijan*, 10 October 1948

When a man is born on this earth, he does not bring anything with him apart from his body. Whatever, he acquires; he gets it from society only. In fact, he depends on the resources which nature and society have created. Therefore, he must replenish the resources which he has used. If he does not do, he is guilty of appropriating the fruits of someone's labor. In case of nature, he is guilty of depletion of exhaustible and non-replaceable resources. Every human being owes a debt to the society when he is born and he will be guilty of theft if he does not work to repay the debt. So, he must respect his inherited right to use the resources created by others by repaying the debt by doing physical labour. Therefore, even the intellectual persons who earn their livelihood through intellectual labour, cannot escape this law.

Hoarding or collection for future use is moral crime. Somebody has stored grains in his house for future but some body may be dying due to hunger at the present moment. Under Nature's Law, he would be held guilty for the situation of hunger on this earth, irrespective of where he resides.

In view of the above, a person should work for his bread, earn his livelihood without exploiting other, use the money earned by him to satisfy his minimum needs and be trustee of whatever surplus is left out and should not hesitate to spend it for welfare of society as and when such need arises.

In society which believes and practices 'aparigraha', wealth will not be considered as index for fetching respect. People in such society will not go for multiplication of ever increasing wants and thereafter, accumulation of wealth. If there is accumulation of wealth, the sons of those who accumulated wealth, may not feel need for work. So in the

society without aparigraha, a section of society will survive on accumulated wealth and will not feel need for work.

However, in a society practicing aparigraha, everybody will have to work to satisfy his basic needs as there will be no inheritance of wealth. In such society, labour will have respect and people will leave together and practice non-violence. Work is a duty cast on man and therefore, everybody must work and hence, everyone has a right to honourable livelihood. Therefore, the society will have social and economic order which respects and ensures this right to everyone.

In society with Aparigraha, everyone will have truthful and nonviolent means to earn livelihood. None will practice deceitful, violent or exploitative means to earn livelihood. Also, all work will be given equal respect. It will have same value. So, all will receive equal remuneration and remuneration would be such so that it ensures a decent living. People will live a life which will lead him to self realization which is nothing but fullest development and expression of one's personality. It will not lead him to vicious circle of multiplying wants.

One should learn to live in present. There is need to take care of needs of present and no need to think of future. There is no need to estimate the needs arising in future. Whether one will be able to see future or not, is not certain and there is no point pondering on things which are yet to take place. Thought of future breeds fear. The sense of fear creates a sense of uncertainty which propels a man to accumulate more and more to secure his future.

## **Trusteeship and Mass Production**

Gandhi believed that aparigraha (abduction of acquisitiveness) would lead to equal distribution, which was his ideal. He thought of equitable

distribution of wealth<sup>13</sup>. To achieve this, he wanted to reorganize the system of production which leads to equality of opportunity, equality of income and reduce wage disparity. He did not want workers to be treated as mere wage earners. He wanted a system of production where the workers are not divested of ownership of instruments of production. He did not believe in transfer of ownership of production to state to get rid of this problem. He was of the opinion that state, too, would behave in the same way, when it is in powerful position and the situation of workers would not improve. He looked upon concentration as an evil/a culprit and was in favour of its minimization/elimination. He was absolutely against its transfer from one hand (mill owners) to other (government).

Many people are of the opinion that without modern science and technology (which leads to concentration), modernization is not possible. Gandhi did not find it to be correct. He was not against modernisation/development of science and technology but he was definitely against it if such development led to subserve the interest of the masses. He was against mass production (on which modern technology emphasized) but was in favour of production by masses. He wanted technology to be developed and implemented to serve the people not to uproot him from his employment. He identified an Acid Test for it: The motive force that propels one to seek or adopt improvements in technology or machinery should not be greed, or profit, but love and the interest of the whole of the society, and not one part or the other.

Gandhiji formulated six criteria to assess machinery and technology: They,

- should subserve the interest of all

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<sup>13</sup> *Young India*, 17 March 1922

- should not lead to concentration of ownership
- should not lead to unemployment
- should not result in distance between centres of productions and centres of distribution
- should not result in alienation and dehumanization
- should not result in the atrophy of the creative and participatory element in the work
- should not reduce men to robot

He was of the view that industry or science and technology in India should serve the masses and they should not lead to disparity in urban and rural areas. To achieve it, he was in favour of decentralization. Only decentralization would be able to fulfill the six criteria laid down by Gandhi. Also, decentralization would promote real democracy. It would also lead to reduction in regional disparity and facilitate the growth of economic self government.

Gandhi was in favour of technology which promoted self employment. He wanted three types of ownership. His first preference was of self employment. If, production was not viable in self employment mode due to economic reasons, he opted for cooperative ownership/social control. Only when, co-operative ownership was not possible, he was in favour of state ownership (only in rare circumstances). He wanted state to take responsibility of public utility, electricity, shipbuilding and like that, but he wanted every form of ownership – individual as well as collective, to function on the basis of Trusteeship.

### **Trusteeship and Instruments of production**

Gandhi was of firm belief that instruments of production must belong to the working class only. In context of industries, it should go to workers



and in case of agriculture, the actual tillers of field should own the instruments of production. Gandhi claimed that he did not know much about Bolshevism but he believed that he was socialist to the core. He, too, wanted the institution of private property to be abolished. In fact, he considered it to be application of the principle of aparigraha (ethical ideal of non-possession) in arena of economics. He did not believe in perpetuation of classes or one class eliminating the others. He advocated for classless society. He wanted the institution of ownership to be altered. Unless the existing pattern of ownership is transformed into the pattern where toiling masses have rights and responsibility to participate in the management of assets/production, it is not possible to eliminate classes in the society.

### **Trusteeship and Profit**

When technology is freed from profit motive, industrial relationships will change, too. If all works are considered to be equal, the idea of superior work and inferior work will vanish. Also, the intellectual people, too, would do some physical labour<sup>14</sup> (say bread labour). Disparity in income will reduce. Disparity will be linked to variation in wants, not to the nature of one's work. Industrial relations will have only two cadres of people – managerial and workers. Gandhi also believed in full and equal participation of workers in management of any undertaking.

Gandhi disapproved the violent dispossession of private ownership as advocated and practiced by communists. He also did not approve the idea of state ownership being the solution to the problem of private ownership. As per him, state ownership will, in practice, operate through the coercive apparatus of State which in reality becomes the managerial apparatus of

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<sup>14</sup> M.K. Gandhi, *From Yeravda Mandir*, p. 50

the State in the economic field. Gandhi's idea on dispossession has been grossly misinterpreted by many. Many alleged that Gandhi believed in preserving existing property relationship. Gandhi is portrayed as defender of private property – one who defended the right of the rich to exploit the poor. It is very unjust misinterpretation of Gandhi's views. Gandhi was opposed to dispossession as he believed that violent means could not solve any social problem. Gandhi did not believe in private property, in inequality of wealth, in inherited riches and in private ownership of the instruments of production.

To achieve these basic changes, Gandhi offered Trusteeship as means. Both capital and labour represent a form of power which can be used either constructively or destructively. Therefore, it is necessary that both should hold their power in trust. Trusteeship could transform the very concept of ownership. Private profit would be replaced by social gain or profit. Possessions would be held in trust for the welfare of the society.

### **Trusteeship and Equity**

Gandhi described inequality of wealth as crime against God. He would not have tolerated them for a day had he power to end them. His speech at the inauguration of Banaras Hindu University delivered by him on 4 February, 1916 describes his feelings towards inequality of wealth: "The Maharaja who presided yesterday over our deliberations spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in the great pandal in which the Foundation Ceremony was performed by the Viceroy. Certainly a most gorgeous show, an exhibition of jewellery..... I compare with the richly bedecked noble men the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying to those noble men: There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and

hold it in trust for your countrymen in India.....whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India, be it in British India, or be it in the India ruled by our great Chiefs, I become jealous at once and say, ‘Oh, it is the money that has come from agriculturists’..... There cannot be much spirit of self government about us if we take away or allow others to take away from the peasants almost the whole of the results of their labour..... “. So, Gandhi was dead against the inequality of wealth. Gandhi knew that the kings survived on the labour of common people who were hard working but fruits of their labour were eaten by these wealthy people who did not have respect for manual work. Such painful situation even exist today.

### **Trusteeship and Ahimsa**

Like Aparigraha, Ahimsa (non-violence), too, is very closely connected with Trusteeship. Gandhi saw the idea of Trusteeship as an inbuilt element of non-violence. He saw Trusteeship as an escapable stage in the methodology of a nonviolent revolution. Gandhi called Trusteeship both as means and ends in the journey of non-violence. Therefore, he claimed that no other theory than the Theory of Trusteeship was compatible with non-violence.

A society which accepts non-violence will have to be away from possessions. A votary of non-violence cannot be hungry for possessions. If he does, he cannot acquire it without exploiting others and exploitation is a form of violence. If he keeps more than (what) is required to satisfy his present needs, he cannot do it without depriving others. Also, he cannot deprive others without resorting to violence. Also, he cannot defend his possessions without resorting to violence. In view of the above, a votary of non-violence must not have any desire for possessions.

He should bother for his present minimum needs and must act as Trustee for what is left as an excess and should use it for others when he is required to do so.

A non-violent society will have to be non-exploitative one. It will be non-exploitative only if economic equality is established. Equal distribution is the ideal. There is need for reconstruction of the whole social order if the ideal of equal distribution has to be put into being. A society based on non-violence cannot have any other ideal. The economic disparity will not vanish unless the present structure is transformed. A transformation cannot come through philanthropy. It will not come unless the concept of ownership is clear to all concerned.

Capitalists will have to understand that old order will not survive. It is better for them to initiate changes themselves failing which they would be forced to change. So, there is only two alternatives – violent dispossessions or nonviolent abdication. It is better that they should not wait for destruction to arrive at their doorsteps. Instead they could opt for Trusteeship which will permit them to retain the stewardship of their property. They could use their excess wealth for poor sections of the society whom Gandhi termed as Daridranarayan. In fact, capitalist acquires and increases his capital at the cost of these daridranarayans only and hence, he should dedicate his excess wealth to them to avoid violent change which these daridranarayans will resort to, if Principle of Trusteeship is not adopted by capitalist world.

Also the progress of civilization tells that human nature changes with passage of time. The nature of man in present age is certainly different from what it used to be in Stone Age. There is no reason to assume that man will not be able to acquire greater control over his mind or his own

nature. The survival of mankind depends on the displacement of selfishness and greed with love and nonviolence, or at least acceptance of the interdependence of interests. It is wrongly presumed that Ahimsa is a weapon to be used in individual capacity. Ahimsa is weapon for society as whole. In fact, there has been no experiment on large scale in non-violence. There have been many experiments on large scale in field of violence and hence, there have been many astonishing discoveries, too. People have made atom bombs and they have been experimented with. People have discovered the power of violence and many such experiments are being carried out in various parts of the world, today also. People have experimented with violence in form of wars. Two world wars have been fought already, so, there have been many discoveries in field of violence. However, the domain of non-violence is still virgin and there is scope for many experiments in the field. If the experiments are carried out, there will be many discoveries about human nature, its relation with peace and non violence and it will give many tools to the world for building lasting peace in the society. Gandhi fully believed that human nature, too, could be changed by the means of non-violence. Gandhi recognized the existence of class conflict but he, too, believed that class war was evitable. Class war can certainly be avoided if society understands the message of nonviolence that stresses on Satyagraha which has a power to influence the minds of exploiters.

Non violence has two arguments:

- Man is capable of being educated and hence he can be reformed.
- Satyagraha derives from love, therefore, Satyagrahi,
  - can soften/relax the mind of adversary by removing the syndrome of fear and aggression which will encourage the adversary to examine the point of view of Satyagrahi.

- can make adversary realize that he is not seeking to harm the true interests of his adversary but he is trying to protect the true interests of adversary by dovetailing it with those of others.

A man will see the reason if there is judicious appeal to his mind and heart. The appeal will work only if a conducive climate is created for appeal to work. One will have to remove fear and the exploiter would have to be made aware that satyagrahi was not against his personal interests. In fact, he would realize that satyagrahi was there to protect his legitimate interests. He would learn that satyagrahi was against the pursuit of self –interest at the cost of the interest of the community. Satyagrahi only demands that there should be no incursions into other’s legitimate interests. The satyagrahi enables the adversary to see this in two ways as described hereunder.

- Non-aggression i.e desisting from physical action that creates the fear that the object of the satyagrahi is to annihilate him,
- Non-Cooperation

Non-aggression enables the ‘adversary’ to see the difference between needs of self preservation and the requirements of self –aggrandizement. Self –aggrandizement can take place only with co-operation of others. If these people (victims of aggrandizement) withdraw their co-operation, aggrandizement, too, will disappear. So, non-aggression will initiate a thought process in the minds of adversaries and he will ultimately decide to retreat as he will find such decision in his favour. He will move from self –aggrandizement to self preservation. He will try to preserve his riches as well as his status in the society as dispossession will take away both. If dispossession is violent, it can take his life, too. Trusteeship allows him to keep stewardship of his property as Trustee. Also,

voluntary renunciation of property brings changes in his personality, too, which in turn brings a new social recognition to him in the society. So, he will be richer for his new reputation or social recognition.

A votary of non-violence cannot believe that the problem of exploitation can be solved by eliminating the exploiter. The individual exploiter can be educated and can be won. Society then will be benefitted from his talent, too, as he knows how to build up/create wealth. So, non violence will convert this exploiter into the asset of the society. The essence of change lies in elimination of evil and not the evil doer. If evil doer is removed, another will come. So, satyagrahi stresses on elimination of evil to get rid of it permanently. The way to get rid of evil is 1) desist it from oneself, 2) resist it when it comes from others. Gandhi knew that no exploitation was possible without help from those who were exploited, either forced or willing. If people refuse to obey the exploiter, there would be no exploitation but people accept exploitation as there is question of self. This is a bitter and basic truth. In fact, violence is the outcome of our reluctance to admit our lack of confidence in our ability to face the consequences of refusing to cooperate with exploiter. So, exploitation is the result of co-operation by the exploited. The moment this cooperation is denied, the hands of exploiter are paralyzed, and his weapons will fall from his hands. He is disarmed. His economic power is sterilized and he would be ready for meaningful negotiations. Gandhi told – ‘My non-co-operation with him will open his eyes to the wrongs he may be doing’. It is this withdrawal of cooperation which Gandhi called non-violent non-cooperation.

## **Trusteeship and Communism**

Gandhi was close to communist and socialist in matter of private property/ownership concept but he had sharp differences with them in the methods. Their languages were different. In fact Gandhi was a revolutionary but he was a non-violent revolutionary. His means to achieve it was non-cooperation which itself was a form of persuasion.

Communist believed that capitalists would not change unless they are forced to do so, which in turn implied that what they believed was that human nature could not be changed. Communists were of the opinion that violence is a reality in any change. Unless workers dispossess the owners using force, owners would never relinquish their possessions voluntarily. So, they viewed violence inevitable to bring the changes. Gandhi sharply differed with them. He was of view that any change which would take place using violence cannot be everlasting. It cannot bring peace which should be the ultimate objective in the society. If a change is not lasting, there is no need for change then. So, Gandhi was in search for lasting change which was possible only through peaceful means and hence, he stressed on the need for change of attitude on part of capitalist class and he kept on trying to bring these changes till his last breath as his fundamental belief was – No man was incorrigible. If there is true nonviolence, he believed, it will awaken the adversary, too. If one fails, it must not be construed that non-violence has failed. The reason would be – one's nonviolence was inadequate or imperfect. So, purity and quantum of nonviolence would decide the arrival of these real changes. True non-violence will certainly bring the changes.

### **Trusteeship and Non-violent non-cooperation**

Non-cooperation is a right, a duty and a non violent weapon. Non violent non cooperation can secure which violence can never dream of. Non



violent non cooperation aims at ultimate conversion of wrong doers. Only brave can use this weapon. The believer of non violence must not have any fear. If he is fearless and ready to face any hardship due to non cooperation with exploiter, the exploiter will be paralyzed. Exploiter will be forced to review his modus operandi. It would bring inner changes in the exploiter and such changes will be lasting in nature. So, Satyagraha is not only an appeal or verbal persuasion but it asks for revolutionary action by the exploited to bring revolutionary changes in the attitude of exploiter. The ultimate purpose is total paralysis of the system of exploitation and extinction of the system finally. Gandhi believed that violence would never bring permanent changes. Changes which would come, would be temporary/transitory in nature. If anything is attained by violence, it has to be retained by violence only. So, the leaders of violent revolution depend on terror, fear, suppression, suspicion which are sources of violence. History is witness that violence has been of no use and hence, mankind is on look out for alternative.

Gandhi was suspicious of state and hence, he was not in favor of state being an alternative to private ownership. He did not want state to have more and more power and convert it into other form of incursion. He looked at human being as a soul which can be persuaded and changed but 'state' for him was soul less, whose foundation and existence was based on the structure of violence and therefore, he looked at 'doctrine of trusteeship' as an alternative. The state is an example of economic and political authoritarianism. If power of state is increased, it harms the mankind by destroying its individuality. So, the summary follows as hereunder:

- Results of violence are transitory as well as illusory

- Violent revolution may reverse the position of labour and capital, but not result in the elimination of exploitation
- Violent elimination of evil doer does not result into elimination of system
- If state suppresses capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the vicious circle of violence
- Violent action which removes the entrepreneur, may retard the economy, which in turn, will cause for chain reactions

Trusteeship would avoid all above evils and would permit society to use the talent of entrepreneur without the evil of exploitation.

Therefore, Trusteeship is to be considered as part of the non violent revolution in satyagrahi's struggle for economic equality and elimination of classes. Satyagrahi will convince the capitalist that Trusteeship is the alternative to destruction. But if all his attempts to persuasion fail, he would resort to corrective mass action (supreme and infallible remedy of nonviolent non-cooperation within the industrial and political system). No society can exist without nuclei of power. Some of these can be voluntary associations. However, the institution like state is not chosen by one but one is born into it. However, both are nuclei of power but they may vary in extent of power. The state is repository of sovereignty and paramount concentration of power in its territory. So, every association of individuals who come together for a common cause is delegated power by its members and hence, it becomes nuclei of initiative and power. In turn, the power is delegated to the executive (leader of the association) who becomes both the repository and beneficiary of power.

All sources of power have to be held in Trust. Power that has social sanction is the power that has been entrusted. One who holds such power

is therefore a Trustee. He may be entrusted power through process of election or nomination. The abuse of trust may be minimized by imposing limitations and penalties including dispossession. He will be accountable for his act. He can be removed if he betrays the trust imposed in him. So, power is vested and held in trust only. Therefore, an element of trusteeship is already there in our social institutes or in recognition of power.

### **Salient features of Trusteeship**

Trusteeship which Gandhi advocated was not philanthropy. In fact Gandhi held – ‘if the trusteeship idea catches, philanthropy will disappear.’ Philanthropy is an act of charity by the Riches. Generally, purpose behind is ‘self glorification’. However, it may result due to compassion or even a limited concession to the sense of social responsibility. Trusteeship calls for renunciation with surrender of ownership. So, ‘element of attitude’ is very important in ‘Trusteeship’.

A Trustee is one who holds property or wealth in trust for others who are identified as beneficiaries. The ideal Trustee means that he holds the Trust solely for other beneficiaries but practically it is not possible. So, the Trustees may have a share of benefit but this share has to be what any other beneficiary receives.

Anyone who aspires to function as a trustee will take nothing for himself that his labour does not entitle him to. The trustee will be entitled to a commission commensurate with the value of his services to the society and in tune with what other workers receive. Criterion of equal wages for all kinds of labour applies in his case, too. A Trustee should take the minimum required for his legitimate needs and leave the remainder for the society.

A Trustee cannot bequeath his property or wealth to his children. A Trustee has no heir except the public. However, if his son or daughter is capable to function as Trustee and accepts all conditions of Trusteeship, he may be made Trustee. A Trustee can only propose his son or daughter to that effect; the final decision will be taken by the State which will satisfy themselves about the ability of nominee. The Trustee will discharge responsibility under the gaze of the beneficiaries as well as the State. If Trustee fails to discharge responsibility, there are two remedies:

- Satyagraha
- Action by the State

There are two misconceptions about Trusteeship Theory given by Gandhi:

- The concept of Trusteeship is meant for those who own property.
- The concept was designed to deal with problems created due to ownership of material possessions (physically external).

Gandhi contradicted both these misconceptions. Gandhi wanted the rich to hold their property as Trustees, but he emphasized that labour, too, was power. Capital and labour go hand by hand. The power of labour lies in its unity. If labour is united, it can be dangerously powerful and even more powerful than capital. So, both capital and labour should hold their power in trust. According to him, capital and labour will be mutual trustees and both will be trustees of consumers. So, Gandhi wanted a new industrial relationship in economic arena. In fact, his Trusteeship Principle was to check the power (any kind of power). It is not only material possessions or physical labour which produces wealth and

power. There is ‘special talent’ (such as talent of an artist) which a man or woman has acquired at birth and such talents make him/her wealthy and powerful. Material wealth can be equally distributed but what about these talents which, too, result into power and wealth and their unequal distribution? So, the man with extraordinary talents should hold his talents in trust for society. The man must be ready to share the fruits of his talents with his neighbours as per the principle of Trusteeship. So, Gandhi’s principle of Trusteeship covered not only material possessions (amenable to equal distribution) but non-material possessions (not amenable to equal distribution), too. For non-material possessions (such as talent of an engineer/doctor etc), state ownership is not a solution.

The views of Gandhi about the relationship between State and Trusteeship need to be examined, too. Gandhi wanted state to legalize the institution of trusteeship. He wanted state to determine the remuneration to be paid to trustees, regulate and approve the appointment of successor trustees, oversee the fulfillment of conditions of trusteeship, dispossess the trustee if he fails to discharge his duty as per the tenets of trusteeship. The state will carry out all the jobs as is expected in a non-violence society. However, Gandhi did not think of institution of trusteeship to be imposed by law. It would be against the principle of non-violence. Any law should be sanctioned by people only. If Trusteeship is to be developed, the people’s minds need to accept it first and hence, an atmosphere of acceptance needs to be created first. When such atmosphere is created, state may adopt the statute giving legal recognition to the institution of trusteeship. To create an atmosphere, the process may be commenced at panchayat level where it may be easier to get acceptance of the idea. Gandhi did not want anyone to wait for the law in this matter. Anyone who believed in it could start with himself. In fact,

Gandhi himself asked all capitalists, property holders and land lords to adopt the principle of trusteeship and keep their property in trust. He asked the capitalists to read writing on the walls, failing which he might face violent dispossession. So, he advised them to transform the form of ownership. According to him, there were two clear choices – 1) class war or 2) voluntary acceptance of Trusteeship. There is advantage in Trusteeship as it would allow the property holders to retain stewardship of his possessions and use his own talent to increase the wealth, not for his sake, but for the sake of society and nation. So, he would do it but without exploitation. He wanted all capitalists to become statutory trustees. If all the efforts fail, he would go for nonviolent non cooperation to open the eyes of all capitalists. Gandhi told, ‘Non-cooperation and civil disobedience are the infallible means as the Rich cannot accumulate wealth without the cooperation of the poor in society.

So, the salient features are as under:

- Gandhi did not believe in private property or the right of inheritance
- According to him, heritance belonged to the nation
- He would examine title to ownership and dispossess any one whose possession was acquired by harming the interests of the masses
- He would not give compensation to those who acquired property by unfair means
- He believed that instruments of ownership should belong to tillers of fields or workers of factory
- He wanted no distinction between employee and employer

- He wanted classless society eliminating syndrome of competition and conflict
- He wanted ownership in form of self employment
- In case, it was not possible (self employment), he advocated for ownership in form of co-operative – equal interest, equal responsibility, equal partnership, equal benefit and equal power.
- Where nature of job did not permit co-operative ownership, he was in favour of state ownership
- Gandhi was worried about increasing power of state (which is concentration of violence)
- He was of the view that state which enjoyed both political and economic power, will reduce its citizens to mere wage earners and would have enormous power.
- Gandhi favoured for an institution which would reduce the differentiation between employee and employer/workers and owners. The institution favoured by him is ‘Institution of Trusteeship’.

Capitalism or status quo is antithesis of such system since it leads to concentration, inequality and exploitation. Both capitalism and state capitalism have yielded to the lure. None of these systems can lead to the equal distribution of power and wealth. So, Gandhi was convinced that solution lied in Trusteeship.

Now, it would be worthwhile to reproduce the text of a formulation on Trusteeship that received the approval of Gandhi himself:

- Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It leaves no room for capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
- It does not recognize any private right of ownership of private property, except in as much as it may be permitted by the society for its own welfare.
- It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
- Thus, under state-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of the society.
- Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in the society.
- The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time, so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
- Under the Gandhian economic order, the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

## **Critical Analysis of Theory of Trusteeship**



- Gunnar Myrdal said , ‘The model is so flexible that it can serve as a justification for inequality’. In this model, trustee would not be entitled to unlimited income from his title or work, or to a remuneration that is proportionate to the wealth that his talent or his capital can produce. His share of benefits will be equal as per Trusteeship Theory. Even so, his remuneration or commission will be fixed by state and therefore subject to criteria or range fixed by the state. This contradicts the very theory of Trusteeship.
- It leaves unchecked power and wealth in the hands of an individual. Jawaharlal Nehru said, ‘Is it reasonable to believe in the theory of trusteeship , to give unchecked power and wealth to one individual and to expect him to use it entirely for the public good? Are the best of us so perfect as to be trusted this way?’ This criticism comes from a person who was closely associated with Gandhi. This criticism does not appear to be valid as Trusteeship Theory describes a number of checks and balances such as,
- His personal wealth would not be inordinately high. His salary will be determined by the state. He will be subject to heavy taxation if his income goes high in spite of all checks
- He will not be able to bequeath his wealth
- He is answerable and removable, by either state or workers through Satyagraha

Gandhi did not want concentration of power/wealth in either individual or state. He found Trusteeship as a tool to achieve it.

- M.L.Dantwala said, ‘It will lead to larger and larger accumulation of capital in one hand and pauperization of the masses on the

other'. This criticism seems to have ignored the fact that workers will be considered equal partners in production activity and their remuneration would fall in the same range as that of trustee. An increase in income of an undertaking will add to the capital of undertaking, not to the wealth of trustee. Gandhi held the view that in a non-violent society, the individual could not accumulate the wealth but the state (non-violent state) could and should do so. In fact, it would be one of the functions of state to do so.

- Another criticism is that the theory demanded 'a change of heart among the rich'. In practical world, it appears to be not possible. As per this, Trusteeship idea is a vision of society where the rich are charitable, so that the poor can remain weak. The author of this criticism said, 'by his (Gandhi's) stress on the principle of

The above criticism may be answered as under:

- The criticism that 'Trusteeship would turn out to be nothing but the vision of society in which the rich are charitable so that the poor can remain weak', too, needs to be countered. The whole philosophy of trusteeship should be viewed in broader perspective of creation of non-violent society. It cannot be assessed in abstraction.
- Regarding 'change of heart', Gandhi did not depend on verbal persuasion only. He depended on Satyagraha as the main weapon. He successfully used this instrument in Africa, Champaran, Bardoli and in British India. Satyagraha emphasizes 'change of attitude/heart' on part of adversaries. 'Change of Heart' is difficult to achieve but it is not impossible to do so. Since it is difficult, it asks for a lot of patience and restraint on part of those who want to

change other's mind and heart. Gandhi saw an element of non-violence in change of mind. If Satyagrahi is able to change the minds of riches in the society, the new order of society to be created based on the principle of Trusteeship will be lasting in nature and it will be a mile stone in human history. Any order of society which is based on the principle of non-violence will be truthful in nature and hence, there will be peace and happiness all round the society. Gandhi wanted to end capitalism and exploitation and evolve 'a truer socialism and truer communism than the world had dreamt of'.

## Conclusion

- Gandhi's method to achieve the above mentioned order of society was method of non-violence. He looked at both capitalism and labour force as sources of power. He did not believe in elimination of evil-doer. Instead he believed in elimination of 'evil' itself. Since both capitalism and labour forces supplement each other, their interests are not mutually exclusive. So, the solution is to be found out without ignoring this independence. Gandhi revolutionized the very concept of property, attitude to property and profit. He emphasized on making profit as social goal. He wanted to use the power of collective direct action (satyagraha) as a tool to correct the deviation if any. For him, Satyagraha was a powerful tool – a tool of brave, which could play miracle if used correctly by correct people with pure objective. He wanted capitalists and labourers to hold their power in trust in the spirit of trusteeship. He viewed both of them as mutual trustees. Also, he wanted both of them to become trustees of consumers. The trusteeship theory does not imply the superiority of trustees. It is

perfectly a mutual affair and each believes that his own interest is best safeguarded by safeguarding the interest of the other. Gandhi also told – I have never said that there should be cooperation between the exploiter and the exploited so long as ‘exploitation’ and ‘the will to exploit’ persists. It is the duty of a believer of non-violence to fight the injustice even at the cost of one’s life. Gandhi, therefore, did not advocate for class collaboration to perpetuate exploitation or capitalism. His objective, too, was to create a classless society but through peaceful means following the principle of non-violence.

- Also he did not believe in the theory of inevitability of class conflict. He did believe that human nature could be changed through persuasion or using the tool of satyagraha as last resort.
- Finally the theory of trusteeship was not conceived as a compromise to enable the rich and the working classes to work together during the struggle for independence. It was not a compromise with the rich, or a sop to the poor. It evolved an integral part of the theory and dynamics of a non-violent revolution in the field of economic relations. Gandhi, therefore, made the deliberate claim that his theory of trusteeship was no makeshift, or camouflage. He was sure that it would survive even when other theories were proved wanting, and discarded.
- The Gandhian Theory of trusteeship is undoubtedly an alternative that merits examination. It may well turn out to be what humanity is looking for.