

Contribution of Gandhian Thought to Corporate Responsibility

Dr. Venkat Pulla^{†*} Vinod Nayak[‡] and Dr. Keshav Walke[§]

Abstract

Mahatma Gandhiji transformed contemporary capitalists amidst the criticism from leftist quarters that he was working for a compromise in the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie. The purpose of this paper is to present a forerunner of today's conversations in the world about corporate social responsibility (CSR). Gandhiji not only befriended a number of businesspersons but also advised them to consider their role as a steward of their wealth and businesses that they held. We intend to substantiate his pious intentions derived from his understanding of Bhagavad Gita, which suggested to him that one could enjoy one's acquired wealth by renouncing it. Persuaded by such moral disposition, Gandhiji argued that it is the surest method to evolve a new order of life of universal benefit of all people in the society as opposed to the order in which most of us live for ourselves without regard to what happens to our neighbour. The paper is based on archival materials representing his conceptualisation and acceptance of trusteeship and the collaborations of the capitalists that lived in his times.

Key words: Trusteeship, Gandhi capitalists, Indian freedom Movement, Corporate Social Responsibility and Gandhi, Swadeshi

[†] Senior Lecturer in Social Work, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, Emails: Venkat.Pull@au.edu.au; dr.venkat.pula@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author

[‡] Entrepreneur, Master of Social Work, Second Year, Indira Gandhi Open University, Email: vinodnayak2011@gmail.com

[§] Assistant Professor, Matru Sewa Sangh Institute of Social Work, Nagpur, India, Email: keshavwalke@yahoo.co.in

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Introduction

There seem to be several definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) but we begin in this article with an understanding that contemporary CSR underpins positive impacts of businesses on meeting the societal expectations. Rooted strongly in philanthropy, it appears that CSR has evolved into carrying social responsibility (Jaysawal and Saha, 2015). While some businesses seem to execute their social responsibility in a tokenistic way, there is an emerging consensus that business enterprises ought to have in place, ethical processes that integrate social, environmental and human rights concerns within their strategic directions.

It is important to note how the definitions of CSR have been evolving. For instance, the European Union held CSR as the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society – a shift from its previous understanding that CSR was an approach whereby companies have an opportunity to integrate social and environmental concern in their business operations and strategies and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (European Commission, 2011).

Background

CSR is a notion of contemporary society that has awakened the multinational business houses to contribute an amount of their profit for the benefit of the society (Jaysawal and Saha, 2015). Arguably, Mahatma Gandhi, the father of India's freedom decades ago, conceived this notion when trying to free India from British Colonialism. This article is an attempt to analyse Gandhiji's thoughts on the idea CSR. This paper is an attempt to re-present and link Gandhian Philosophies to the contemporary philosophy of CSR. India's freedom movement provided a rich tapestry for working experiments to what is being termed as CSR today. Relevantly we have utilised Gandhiji's journey through the freedom movement and how he was able to influence on contemporary leaders of business houses during his time. Of relevance are the theories

of Trusteeship that the paper attempts to link with the contemporary notion of CSR.

In this article, we argue social responsibility as a precursor to the overarching concept of trusteeship. Throughout the period of struggle for freeing India from the British rule, there were ample opportunities to gear and galvanise the rich, the middle and poor classes towards giving back something to the society to which they belong. The long drawn political struggle for freeing India also presented some economic opportunities to make cohesive working classes but to unite, picket against sanctions and taxation, etc. While it is not within the purview of this paper to review details of Salt Satyagraha and March at Dandi or manufacturing of *Khadi*,¹ white cloth as a protest to imported cloth from Manchester, UK, it would suffice to say these acts provided economic relief, opportunity to struggle, signals for survival and showed that people would cope and were resilient. Gandhiji appears to have held a view that no one actually owns anything in the creation— and that the world has enough for everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed connoting that we have a need to look after and administer our wealth for the betterment of the community in which we live. This is rather a philosophical construct that makes great sense both in terms of appreciating the concept of trusteeship and its relevance to modern notions as corporate social responsibility.

¹ Salt Satyagraha and March at Dandi and the manufacturing of Khadi were examples of Gandhian social action, which is underpinned by non-violent communication. Satyagraha can be translated as the insistence on truth. The march by Gandhiji and thousands of other people to Dandi to collect a piece of salt was to draw attention to the hardship that individuals in India were experiencing in meeting basic human rights under the British colonial rule. The manufacturing of Khadi was a strategy to strengthen local production. Gandhiji encouraged the poor to produce and wear their own cloth rather than using British textiles. He indeed visualised this as empowerment through self-reliance and strengthening individuals through their inner struggle for truth (Ziegler et al., 2014).

Gandhiji visualised a very creative dynamic between the individual and collective wellbeing. He saw the two as being in sync. Nobody should be asked to pay the price for the majority to benefit.... Your physical self is a temporary manifestation in time and space. In this context, Gandhiji is saying whatever you generate is never fully yours because it's going to be there long after you. In essence, you are only its caretaker. Clinging to material wealth is therefore a redundant pursuit ((Balch, 2013))

Thus, trusteeship was based on the belief that we do not really 'own' our wealth but are only trustees of it, meaning that we have to administer our wealth for the benefit and betterment of the community. Gandhiji wanted to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. However, by this, he never meant absolute equality between the haves and have-nots. He envisaged that food, cloth and shelter are the basic needs of the human beings. Therefore, the excess wealth or property of the rich can add welfare to the society. The wealth and talent should be considered as a trust of the whole society and as 'trustee', the individuals should handle it for the betterment of society. Gandhi looked at "Trusteeship" concept as a solution to the problem of inequality or imbalance of power. Looking at Gandhian trusteeship more closely, we might ask what it actually means to be a trustee. A trustee is one who-consciously assumes responsibility for upholding, protecting all possessions, acquisitions and earnings. For an individual to be a trustee in any meaningful way it implies that he or she is self-governing and morally sensitive. A trustee is deeply aware of the unmet needs of others and, simultaneously, capable of controlling and altering his own appropriating tendencies.

Gandhiji acknowledged that he was inspired to think about the trusteeship as he read through the following particular verse from Isavasya Upanishad.

isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinca
jagatyam jagat

tena tyaktena bhunjitha ma grdhah
kasya svid dhanam²

Translated, it means that all things animate or inanimate that appear within the universe seem under the control of supreme power or the Lord. Even ownership is attributed to the Lord. It is expected therefore that as a human being we only take or accept what is needed for one's own living, apportion it and then not go after anything more nor accept anything more knowing fully that they could be utilised by others.

Once Gandhiji declared:

Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between the capital and the labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of Government is clearly impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good (Gandhi, 1941 p. 18).

Where Karl Marx is seen as vehemently opposed to capitalism, Gandhiji viewed the rich or capitalist people more humanely and urged them to be the trustees of the properties that they hold; in so doing, Gandhiji reckoned

² isa--by the Lord; avasyam--controlled; idam--this; sarvam--all; yat kinca-- whatever; jagatyam--within the universe; jagat--all that is animate or inanimate; tena--by Him; tyaktena--set-apart quota; bhunjithah--you should accept; ma--do not; grdhah--endeavor to gain; kasya svid--of anyone else; dhanam--the wealth.

lasting benefits to the society at large through such trust.

Indeed, Gandhiji believed that *aparigraha* or the non-accumulation of possessions and objects would be the beginning of distribution of wealth. Equal distribution was his ideal. However, since absolute equality will be unattainable, and even injurious in some cases, so, it would be better to work for the equitable distribution of wealth (Kapoor, 2006).

Like *aparigraha*, *ahimsa* (non-violence) too led Gandhiji to the concept of Trusteeship. He strongly believed in that the idea of Trusteeship was inherent in the ideology of *ahimsa*. It was his conviction that as soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of a society, earns for its sake, spends for its benefit, then purity enters into his earnings and there is *ahimsa* in his venture. If men's mind turns towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in the society, and that without bitterness. However, he did not believe in imposing Trusteeship. He wanted rich to voluntarily begin embracing the concept as in such conversions they can see, feel and visualise their retainership or stewardship of their possessions and continue to increase the wealth. However, in context, such net increases build the community and the nation while ensuring that as trustees, they are equally provided for. Gandhi advocated for all the capitalists to have the opportunity to become statutory trustees when India becomes a free country, further he emphasised that such statutes will not be imposed from above, but it will come with the consent and trust of the people. His intentions were humble, soulful and noble and strongly believed that the rich people could be persuaded to depart with their wealth to help the poor. Gandhi in the year 1939 explained:

Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth – either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry – I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of

others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community

Arguably, Gandhiji's concept of trusteeship is not just a philosophy; it is indeed a way of life. Trusteeship is calculated to promote relationship among people whose interest and their roles in the society seems to be conflicting. Trusteeship is designed with a view to eliminate the distance between people and bring them as closer as possible.

The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own countrymen – the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. Everyone must have balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of everyone's children and adequate medical relief. If capitalist look into these aspects there will not be violence and people will become closer than earlier ³

Gandhiji advocated that private entrepreneurs run businesses as trustees and use the wealth they create to improve society, after keeping a reasonable profit for themselves. He made it clear that trusteeship goes beyond material wealth; business owners should also share their non-material knowledge and talents with society (Varma, 2012).

Pierre Ceresole, Founder of Service Civil International, during his visit to India in 1935, met Gandhiji and raised some concerns on the profit, which entrepreneurs can keep for themselves. Gandhiji informed him that rich could keep up to 25%; however, ideal should be 5-15% (Gandhi1973, pp. 121-22).

³ For more detailed explanations it is suggested to read SEVAGRAM, February 11, 1942 and *Harijan*, 15-2-1942 both included in the comprehensive 'the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandh'i in The Gandhi, M.K, (1942), Navjivan Trust, Ahmedabad

Theories of Trusteeship

Pyarelal, Kishoribhai and Naraharibhai who are the associates of Gandhiji drafted a simple Trusteeship formula, while they were in Aga Khan Palace detention camp and presented it to Gandhiji, and he made few changes in it and the final draft read as follows:

- Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to 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 recognise any right of private ownership of property, except in as much as it may be permitted by 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 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 (Gandhi, M.K, 1998 pp39-40)

The Trusteeship theory demanded a change of heart, and in the real world expecting such a revolution was unlikely. He did not depend merely on verbal persuasion or appeal, but on Satyagraha, the main

weapon that he used with spectacular effect for a change of heart or for progressive shifts in the positions of his adversary that ultimately brought him (the adversary) closer and closer to the baseline that Gandhi had drawn for himself in South Africa, in Champaran, in Bardoli, at Vykom and in what was British India. These achievements cannot be lightly brushed aside by any student of social dynamics and economics and management.

Using his beliefs in non-violent actions Gandhiji shaped a program of moral action called Satyagraha. "Satyagraha can be translated as the insistence on truth" (Ziegler et al., 2014: 1024). He believed that even though absolute truth is unattainable, individuals should still strive for the truth, emphasising the exploration of moral truth in practical life. This program was aimed at persuasion rather than defeat leading an opponent to new insights or change in attitude. The focus of Satyagraha is not on blaming others but to find a way forward by making one's own basic needs known and finding a way to meet them in a non-violent way (Zeigler et al., 2014).

In 1918, Gandhiji intervened in a dispute between the workers and owners of Ahmadabad. It was here that he used the weapon of hunger strike and won for the workers a 35% increase in wages. In the words of Gandhiji, Kheda, a district in the state of Gujarat witnessed a widespread failure of crops and the Patidars of Kheda were considering the question of getting the revenue assessment for the year suspended. The cultivators' demand was as clear as daylight, and so moderate as to make out a strong case for its acceptance. Under the Land Revenue Rules, if the crop was four *annas* or under, the cultivators could claim full suspension of the revenue assessment for the year. According to the official figures, the crop was said to be over four *annas*. The contention of the cultivators, on the other hand, was that it was less than four *annas*. However, the Government was not in a mood to listen, and regarded the popular demand for

arbitration as the *lese majeste*.⁴ At last, all petitioning and prayer having failed, after taking counsel with co-workers, Gandhiji advised the Patidars to resort to Satyagraha. This peasant struggle known as no-tax peasant struggle involved Gandhiji and Sardar Vallabhai Patel in principal leadership joined by Indulal Yajnik, N.M. Joshi, Shankerlal Pareekh and several other volunteers who believed in Gandhiji and his mission (Mondal, 2014). As a Satyagraha on non-violent lines tactically co-opted the support of urban elites and intelligentsia, the movement provided an opportunity to the urban elites and intelligentsia to understand and appreciate the vagaries of peasants and their struggle against an alien British raj reluctant to remit the land tax. This learning opportunity for the urban and educated offered them to sympathetically align themselves with the peasantry that actually work, produce and feed the country. The above significant struggles with the mill workers in Ahmedabad and interventions in Kheda famine brought Gandhiji in close contact with the masses and brought in new forms of political education.

The Technique of Change of Heart

Trusteeship was Gandhiji's contribution to the social change. He called it the technique of change of heart. Gandhiji is often quoted as saying that in the Ramarajya (the kingdom of Rama) of his dream, I am in divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For him Rama the Hindu God and Rahim the Muslim God were the same. He appeared to acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and righteousness. Whether Rama of his imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramarajya is undoubtedly described in his words as 'one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Apparently, even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ramarajya (Bakshi, 2013).

Hence, taking into account the definition of CSR by World Business Council literally as outlined above, trusteeship can be defined as taking individual responsibility for one's own life as well as for the life of our neighbours. It is clear that Gandhiji was not opposing or hindering the spread of new ideas and new social or political developments in any obscurantist methodology, he simply believed that even the last man required help and need to be served. He believed in *antyodaya* – means 'serving the last man in the queue'.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Contemporary Context

CSR links corporate sector to social sector. It is becoming more relevant in our society plagued by increasing inequalities between haves and have-nots. CSR means that the corporate sector, which earns profit through the sale of its goods and services in the society also, has some responsibility towards it. This is essential to promote growth with equity and to achieve an inclusive society. Increasing number of industrial houses is taking active interest in the welfare of the employees, their families and society at large. Starting from the provision of basic necessities like drinking water, primary education, health facilities to the development of environment friendly technologies on regional/national or even international scale, they are working in various spheres. In taking up few initiatives, some of them also have enlightened self-interest in mind. They are not only able to advertise their products but are also selling them to the beneficiaries of their activities.

Historians tell us that the first organisations were originally under the direction of the state and they were obliged to serve the public interest. However, by the end of the 19th century there was a push to allow private organisations without state intervention and with this the obligation to serve the public interest was no longer a requirement. The focus of these organisations was on profit for shareholders and the relationship between business and society became an economic one (Banerjee, 2008). Today when it comes to CSR,

⁴ An offence against the dignity of reigning British rulers and bureaucracy.

the neoliberal focus of removing state from regulating the market has led to a change in focus on the needs and interests of corporations rather than the public interest (Banerjee, 2008).

The earliest form of CSR was philanthropy and is no longer regarded by scholars as an adequate response for corporate responsibility. To be affective a company's CSR should consider the impact they have on the environment, social and human rights. The company should not be seen as separate from society but having an integral part in its effective functioning (Arora & Puranik, 2004). CSR is considered optional and in an environment where the main responsibility of the organisation is to its shareholders, CSR can often be left to the morality and ethics of management. This relies on the management to make a business case for CSR, providing a rationale that the proposed CSR is good business sense and enhances shareholder value (Banerjee, 2008). In line with corporate responsibility to shareholders, CSR is often used as a device to improve corporate reputation and as advertising to increase sales (Mitra, 2012). CSR has become a philanthropy exercise rather than concern for an organisation's impact on the environment, society or human rights (Arora & Puranik, 2004). Mitra (2012, p131) explains that many multinational companies expanding into both developing and developed countries use a nation-building rhetoric that declares that they are working for the national good. This kind of rhetoric can make it difficult to oppose companies where they may not be corporately responsible (Banerjee, 2008).

Jayant Pandya (2007), in his book, 'Gandhi and his disciples', indicated that Gandhiji's belief in non-violence supported his views against the physical liquidation of the capitalists and the landed gentry. Pandya (2007) asserted that Gandhiji did believe that the capitalist exploitation ought to end. Gandhiji in fact said that: My theory of trusteeship is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the

sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. No other theory is compatible with non-violence. In the non-violent method, the wrong does compass his own end, if he does not undo the wrong. For, either through non-violent, non-cooperation, he is made to see the error, he finds himself completely isolated. Gandhi wanted to ensure distributive justice by ensuring that business acts as a trustee to its many stakeholders and specified that economic activities cannot be separated from other activities. Economics is part of the way of life, which is related to collective values. For Gandhiji true economics stood for social justice, promoted the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for a decent life (Gandhi, 1973). This has implications at the macroeconomic level as well as at the micro level, as it talks of equitable distribution of wealth being a measure of success, rather than the form, which as high income disparities. Gandhi believed that the rich people could be persuaded to part with their wealth to help the poor. Putting it in Gandhiji's words:

Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth – either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry – I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community Gandhi, (1973)

Many Indian corporations' ethical models are framed loosely on Gandhian ethics, involving philanthropy. This is because, as already well known, Gandhiji was able to influence both chief executives of Indian corporations and in having his ethics written into official state policy because of the close relationships he had with these individuals (Mittra, 2012). After the First World War, wealthy concerned Indian industrialists influenced by Gandhian philosophy of trusteeship reinvested their money into new industries and made contributions to schools, hospitals, technical

training, health and rural development. These businesspersons in India believed that their wealth and businesses were a trust, which was held in the interest of the community at large (Arora & Puranik, 2004; Singh, 2010).

The TATA Group and Gandhi

The TATA group of companies is based around this principle. Trusteeship is the model of responsibility that best describes the group founder – JRD Tata's view of himself and his role in the world. It was a view that JRD essentially derived from Gandhiji wherein Gandhiji talked frequently about the role of business as being that of a trustee or a steward for what you hold.

Gandhi's relation with TATA's went back to his day in South Africa. Tata had sent a letter along with a cheque of ₹ 25,000/- to help Gandhiji in his struggle in South Africa. Gandhiji received more such contributions for his Satyagraha movement in South Africa. In 1925, Gandhiji visited Jamshedpur many times and he went there mainly for the sake of labourers. In his speech, he said "I have always said that capital and labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony." He also said that he being identified with labour does not conflict his friendship with capital. He emphasised that though he has been obliged to distance himself from the capital, capitals in the end regarded him as a true friend. He said that he came as a friend of Tatas and remembered the support, which Tatas provided during his struggle in South Africa.

JRD in a letter to Shriman Narayan in the year 1973 wrote that he knew Mahatma Gandhi and that he was quite impressed and believed in the spirit of trusteeship. JRD in his letter reiterated that he was always in agreement with Gandhi's concept of trusteeship and have throughout his career tried to live up to it. Finally, he wrote that the principles of trusteeship are part of his group's companies (Sarukkai, S, 2012)

Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata is considered the pathfinder of modern industrial builders. He is known as the grandfather of Indian Industry for

his acumen and enthusiasm. When India was under British rule, Jamsetji Tata dreamt of an industrialised, prosperous, and independent nation (Sivakumar, 2008). Jamsetji Tata, who founded TATA Group, strongly felt that in a free enterprise, the community is not just another stakeholder in business, but is in fact the very purpose of its existence (cited in Branzei, 2010, p. 3). Two other features of trusteeship at the Tata Group are its participation in national institution building and emphasis on individual obligations. Mr Jamsetji Tata selected many of his new ventures with the intent of helping India's development, focusing on three areas - steel, hydroelectric power, and technical education/research. The Founder of the Tata group began with a textile mill in central India in the 1870s. His powerful vision inspired the steel and power industries in India, set the foundation for technical education, and helped the country leapfrog from backwardness to the ranks of industrialised nations. However, his dreams was fulfilled by his sons, when they began with Tata Iron and Steel Factory in 1907 three years after his death.

Gandhiji outlined how business attention to stakeholders and social needs may create "shared" value in a capitalist system. He said that:

If a good road is constructed in a city, the value of the buildings appreciates. If the roads in Ahmedabad (a large city in India) are widened and kept clean, the adjoining land will rise in value. In addition to this, there is an economic gain, which follows from improved health of the people and the resulting increase in their vitality and lifespan (Gandhi, 1925c, p. 468).

On charity, Jemshetji Tata once said, that there is a kind of charity common enough amongst them.

It is that patchwork philanthropy which clothes the ragged, feeds the poor, and heals the sick. I am far from decrying the noble spirit, which seeks to help a poor or suffering fellow being... [However] what advances a nation or a

community is not so much to prop up its weakest and most helpless members, but to lift up the best and the most gifted, so as to make them of the greatest service to the country.⁵

It is said that 85% of the Tata family's original shares in Tata Sons were transferred to two charitable trusts by the mid-20th century (Khanna, Palepu, and Danielle, 2006). 8 and 14% of the Group's annual net profits have been distributed to social causes through these charitable trusts (Branzei, 2010). The trusts have invested in scientific and technological education in India as well as in NGOs, which engage in social development activities. Interestingly, when Jamsetji Tata gave grants to students who wanted to pursue higher education abroad, he stated that: "[t]hough I can afford to give, (but) I prefer to lend" (cited in Lala, 1981 p. 138). This statement is very consistent with Gandhiji's ideas of Swaraj or self-reliance. Gandhiji said:

My idea of village Swaraj is that is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet independent for many others in which dependence is necessary. As far as possible, every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis (Gandhi, (1973).

Gandhiji addressed an audience graced by the presence of a galaxy of the heads of the feudal states on the occasion of the opening of the Banaras Hindu University in February 1916, which set the Ganga on fire. He said devastatingly:

His Highness the Maharaja who presided yesterday over our deliberations, spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress on it. But what did we witness in the great pandal in which the Viceroy performed the foundation ceremony? Certainly a most gorgeous show, an

exhibition of jewellery, which made a splendid jeweller who chose to come from Paris. I compare with the richly bedecked noblemen the millions of the poor: and I feel like saying to these noblemen: There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourself of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India (Speech on 04-02-1916).⁶

Jamnalal Bajaj's life was an unremitting Gandhian quest throughout. And to follow in Gandhian footsteps to the point of being a voluntary celibate was a rare exercise. Gandhiji's trusteeship theory was exemplified in Bajaj's life. And rightly did Gandhiji say in a tribute to him in his newspaper 1942.

Whenever I wrote of wealthy men becoming the trustees of their wealth for the common good, I always had this merchant prince principally in mind". In sum, Jamanalal Bajaj was a 'Seth' and a 'Sadhak', a businessman and a spiritual leader at the same time. He was a man of the people. His head was sometimes in the clouds, but his feet were always on the ground.

Whenever I wrote of wealthy men becoming trustees of their wealth for the common good, I had Jamnalal in mind

Conclusion

In this paper, authors have presented a brief overview of India's freedom movement. Gandhi's role and how he articulated trusteeship as a bridge between corporates and freedom struggle. Trusteeship is Gandhiji's conceptualisation of the contribution of business houses towards social well-being. It is

⁵ Jemshetji Tata, Retrieved from, <http://www.tata.com/aboutus/articlesinside/The-quotable-Jamsetji-Tata>

⁶ Speech is taken from selected works of Mahatma Gandhi Volume-Six
The Voice of Truth Part-I Some Famous Speeches page 3 to 13

a theoretical construct seeking to redefine the relationship between indigenous business houses and the nationalist movement. Gandhiji succeeded in persuading the corporates or businessmen to participate in the freedom struggle.

Gandhiji's principle of trusteeship is more relevant today. He wanted the corporates to act as trustees to its stakeholders and develop the culture of sharing. He clearly states that distribution of wealth is not about charity but about ensuring basic human dignity. This also builds the case for CSR being embedded within the business values of the private sector. Everything that we do must be economically viable as well as ethical at the same time making sure that we build sustainable livelihoods for all. Economic equality through trusteeship will ensure an equitable distribution of wealth amongst all.

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