

# **Gandhian Concept of Trusteeship**

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Post Graduate, Deptt. of Philosophy  
By: Dr. Vijeta Singh, Asstt. Prof.

Gandhi's doctrine of trusteeship is a social and economic philosophy aiming to bring justice in the society. It provides a means by which the wealthy people would be the trustees of the trust that looked after the welfare of the people in general. Gandhi believed that the wealthy people could be persuaded to part with their wealth to help the poor.

This principle reflects Gandhi's spiritual development, which he owed partly to his deep involvement with the theosophical literature and the study of the Bhagavad Gita.

Gandhi holds that labour is superior to capital. Though his views resemble those of Marx. But unlike Marxism he would not recommend an overthrow of the capitalists by force. He is not in favour of inciting labour against capital. Unlike Marxism he does not believe that class-struggle is the key of social development. He believes that society has to be based on love and mutual trust, not on struggle.

After the Ahmedabad textile mill workers cause Gandhi became more aware about the prevailing gap of interest between the owners and workers of the industries. Gandhi ji introduced the concept of the trusteeship based in the theme of the "CLASS COOPERATION" in society.

Gandhi believes that even the rich people – the so called capitalist are after all human beings, and as such they also have in them an element of essential goodness that everyman necessarily possesses. If that element aroused and if the

capitalist is also won over by love, they would be persuaded to believe that the wealth in their possession should be utilised for the good of the poor. The rich people should be made to realise that the capital in their hands is the fruit of the labour of the poor men. This realisation would make them perceive that the welfare of the society lies in using capital and resources for the good of others and not for one's personal comforts.

Thus it is apparent that Gandhi 's doctrine of trusteeship is based on a sense of morality and love. This doctrine is nothing but a sincere practice of the doctrine of the Non- possession. The rich also must be made to realise, through a loving process, the merit of Non- possession.

A critic of Gandhi might say that this doctrine is based on the assumption of honesty on the part of the rich but this is no criticism of Gandhi because Gandhi 's entire belief is based on the presupposition that every man inwardly is good.

Thomas Aquinas (Italian philosopher of 13th century) viewed that bringing justice is not only the responsibility of the state but also of individuals by being empathetic, compassionate and altruistic person. Trusteeship is synonymous to this idea. It is the responsibility of rich people to uphold the doctrine of trusteeship by being charitable.

Trusteeship assumes great relevance nationally as well as internationally keeping in mind the growing inequality and poverty e.g. Oxfam report reveals that one percent people in the world possesses fifty percent of world's total wealth and particularly in India one percent people owns fifty-eight percent of total wealth in India. This entire picture unearths the socio-economic injustice prevailing in our society.

The Gandhian principle of trusteeship is closely related to the social responsibility of Business. According to Gandhian concept of trusteeship all business firms must work like a trust. Trusteeship tries to reduce inequalities. It tries to reduce the gap between the rich and poor. According to Gandhi businessmen should change their attitude. They have no moral right to accumulate unlimited wealth while most of their countrymen live in poverty and misery.

Few richest men in the world especially Bill Gates and Warren Buffet are practising the Gandhian principle of trusteeship. These noble philanthropists are distributing a huge percentage of their wealth for social causes. Recently during corona pandemic every section of society like businessmen, film stars, sports person donated a great amount of money for the welfare of the society. Their willingness to serve society is admirable. It displays the relevance of Trusteeship in present age.