



## Gandhian trusteeship and nation's development

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**Abstract:** Relationship is the oxygen of life. Trusteeship is calculated to promote relationship. That is why trusteeship is the vital breath of all our social relationships, more particularly our industrial relationships. Economic equality is the master key to nonviolent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and 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.

**Key words:** nonviolent, independence, Marxist, Trusteeship

### Introduction

Trusteeship is not merely a principle not even a philosophy. Some witty philosopher has defined 'philosophy' with withering humour, "it is a labyrinth of dead-end streets and blind alleys leading, from nothing to nowhere." Trusteeship is the very stuff of life, the material of which life is made because life ultimately consists of relationships. There is no life without relationship. Relationship is the essence of life and trusteeship is calculated to promote relationship among men whose interests and whose roles seem to be conflicting. That, to my mind, is the very fundamental truth about trusteeship.

### Radical Social Change

There is one more aspect of trusteeship. Trusteeship is a means of revolution or radical social change. In the economic field there is the idea of description, which has been propagated by Marxist revolutionaries. There is the method of confiscation of all property by the state. Then there is the accepted method of taxation which has been universally accepted even in the democratic countries. But all these methods agree in not bringing men closer to each other.

This process of social change, to my mind, is a process of ascent and all ascents must ultimately result in approach. So trusteeship is designed with a view to eliminate the distance between men and bring them, not only in body but also in mind, as close together as possible.

Relationship is the oxygen of life. Trusteeship is calculated to promote relationship. That is why trusteeship is the vital breath of all our social relationships, more particularly our industrial relationships. I am reminded of the words of Daniel Defoe with which I shall conclude. These words are as true of labour as of capital. I do not like the crew; I shall not sink the ship. Rather I shall do my best and save it from disaster at the cost of my life. You see, we are all in the same craft and sail or swim together." That is the basic idea which lies at the root of this scheme of trusteeship.

If success for the mandates and trusteeships is measured in terms of achieving independence, the trusteeship system obviously has been more successful. If it is measured in terms of achieving economic, political, and cultural development before nationhood,



perhaps the more cautious approach of the mandate system has provided better results.

"Gandhiji has been hailed as the man of the millennium all over the world. His contribution in attaining freedom for the country from the British through peaceful and nonviolence means has been applauded. But the contribution of Gandhiji to the world was far more in various other things than in gaining freedom for this country, however important it was. Winning freedom for India was only a part of a long journey he had undertaken for improving the quality of life of human beings, for injecting fairness in public life, for making society responsive to the needs of the poorest of the poor, in providing alternative solution for economic development and rearrangement of social forces in this country. After Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ he was the tallest man ever born in this World. Lord Buddha and Jesus Christ set up religions based on compassion and love. Gandhiji set up no religion, established no hierarchy Or religious order. He did not set up any math nor organized any group as his followers and yet he was the first in the living memory to say that irrespective of the religion to which you may belong or preach, the man must have equal respect for all religions and regard people belonging to different religions-different social and cultural groups, different economic strata as brothers and sisters. It was Gandhiji who declared "I am a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, a Zoroastrian, a Jew" to which exasperated Jinnah shouted "Only a Hindu could say that".

Gandhiji was one of the most original thinkers that the world has ever come across of the status of Plato, Rousseau,

Tolstoy, or Marx but the real difference lays in that each of the original thinkers before Gandhiji came on the scene while paying all the intellectual input to the community did not live a life based on their teaching. Gandhiji was the first one to lead a life based on what he preached. In fact, he practiced all that he told in his life. In a way his life was his message.

To our countrymen he was the one to teach 'and demonstrate that to attain joy of *mukti* pleasures of heaven, you do not have to retire to the Himalaya or Ashram nor leave the problems and woes of the people for someone else to find solutions. No wonder Acharya Vinoba Bhave found in him *Shanti* (peace) of the Himalaya and *Kranti* (revolution) of Bengal. His was an integrated human being. It is sad that while paying occasional and ritual respect to the memory of Gandhiji as the Father of our Nation or has one who stood for nonviolence not much has been done about various other aspects of his contribution. In fact, most of the things that he stood for have been forgotten. Delhi has not only been the cremation ground where the body of Mahatma. Gandhi *was* cremated, it has become the burial ground for all that he stood for in life.

In 1946 Gandhiji said: "I have never been in such darkness as I am today." He saw himself wandering alone on cremation ground-premonition for the partition massacres that were to follow. In fact in 1947 he asked: "Who listens to me today?" Fifty years later one would sadly scream. Who even cares to remember what he said or did for all of us?" Things are being taken for granted. In this particular small piece, I would like to touch upon some of the most prominent aspects of Gandhiji's message to our country and to our people apart from winning freedom for us and



attempts to lead us to nonviolent social order.

"If the thought of nonviolence was not put forward by Gandhiji, somebody else would have put forward, because nonviolence was a historic need. But if the thought of Khadi were not presented to us by Gandhiji, I do not think that anyone of us could have imagined about Khadi."

Economic equality is the master key to nonviolent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and 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 nonviolent 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.

### **Non-violent Way**

By the non-violent method, we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. We invite the capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital. Nor need the worker wait for his conversion. If capital is power, so is work. Either is dependent on the other.

Immediately the worker realizes his strength, he is in a position to become a co-sharer with the capitalist instead of remaining his slave.

If he aims at becoming the sole owner, he will most likely be killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Not need I be afraid of someone else taking my place when I have non-co-operated. For I expect to influence my co-workers so as not to help the wrong-doing of my employer. This kind of education of the mass of workers is no doubt a slow process, but as it is also the surest, it is necessarily the quickest. It can be easily demonstrated in the end of the worker and as no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil.

### **Community Welfare**

I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees, i.e., owners, not in their own right, but owners in the right of those whom they have exploited.

### **The Choice**

As for the present owners of wealth, they will have to make their choice between class war and voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth. They will be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions and to use their talent, to increase the wealth, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation and, therefore, without exploitation. The State will regulate the rate of commission, which they will get commensurate with the service rendered, and its value to society. Their children will inherit the stewardship only if they prove their fitness for it.



Supposing India becomes a free country tomorrow, all the capitalists will have an opportunity of becoming statutory trustees. But such a statute will not be imposed from above. It will have to come from below. When the people understand the implications of trusteeship and the atmosphere is ripe for it, the people themselves, beginning with gram panchayats, will begin to introduce such statutes. Such a thing coming from below is easy to swallow. Coming from above it is liable to prove a dead weight.

**Conclusion:** Gandhiji was the first one to lead a life based on what he preached. In fact, he practiced all that he told in his life. In a way his life was his message. I think that any wealth creates a sense of trusteeship... It is characteristic of the new generation which has created wealth to have some amount of responsibility for it.

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