

## THE STUDY OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF BHAGAVAD GITA KARMA YOGA AND GANDHIAN TRUSTEESHIP THEORY

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### **Abstract**

*The perspectives of Bhagavad Gita Karma yoga and Gandhian Trusteeship Theory are foundation of Corporate Social Responsibility in Indian history. The purpose this paper is to study the driving principles of Gandhian Trusteeship and Bhagavad Gita Karma yoga caused for evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility.*

*The researcher proposes to verify his reverent objectives resulting from his thoughts on Karma yoga, which compelled him to think that one could enjoy ones acquired wealth by surrendering it. Convinced by such ethical temperament, Gandhiji contended that it is the certain process to develop a new demand of life for entire advantage of public in the world as contrast to which all of us live for ourselves without respect to what transpires to our neighbors.*

*As well the researcher investigates the Bajaj Group, one of India's major conglomerates, has historically continuously applied and used Gandhi's principle of trusteeship. We also discuss how the Bajaj Group, a leading Indian corporation, has practiced trusteeship*

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Gandhi, Trusteeship, Karma yoga, Bajaj Group*

### **Aim**

The aim of this research is to study strong potential of Bhagavad Gita Karma yoga and Gandhian Trusteeship Theory to enhance Corporate Social Responsibility in business firms.

### **Introduction**

Mahatma Gandhi promoted trusteeship principle. The trusteeship principle is that those people having wealth should detain it in trust for societies. Society is to be regarded as a donor to the individual and accordingly it is essential to distribute portion of his assimilated wealth with the society for common advantage. According to this principle, business firms have to be viewed as socio-economic institutions to be run and owned by 'Trust Corporation' with considerably diluted shareholdings. Most of the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi on trusteeship find expression in his speeches, short notes, and press interviews and informal discussions.

In the Nov. 26, 1932 issue of Young India, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "My idea of society is that while we are born equal, meaning thereby that we all have an equal right to civil right, all haven't an equivalent capacity. It is in the nature of things impossible. For example, all cannot have same height, colour or degree of intelligence. Therefore, in nature of things, some will have ability to earn more others less". Usually, people with talents will have more. These people should be regarded to survive as trustees without any terms. Organizations and individuals possessing surplus wealth over and above their legitimate and genuine needs should spend it on community welfare activities as part of their social responsibilities. Explaining his ideas on this issue, Gandhi added: Suppose I even have earned a good amount of wealth either by way of legacy or by means of trade and industry. I must know that all that belongs to me is the right to an honorable livelihood no better than what enjoyed by millions of others; the rest of my wealth belongs to the community and be used for the welfare of the

community. Mahatma Gandhi's speech to the trade unions in Shri Lanka in 1927, he told that principles of trusteeship are applicable to the trade unions in the similar manner as they were to the business firms. "Each of you should consider yourself to be a trustee for the welfare of the rest of your fellow labourers treatment from your employers, proper sanitary lodgings, you will recognize that you should treat the business of your employers as if it were your own business and give to it your honest and undivided attention."

Bhagavad-Gita teachings, it has been guided that ideal actions lead one to the entrance to Moksha *i.e.* liberation. Clearly, the Hindu beliefs on 'karma' has set a framework for management act for modest corporate 'Karma' by the reinforcement of CSR. Muniapan and Dass, (2008); Muniapan and Shaikh, (2007); Kodandaramayya, (2004).The Bhagavad-Gita also endorses the idea of nishkama karma; a standpoint on deed and decision making that stresses accomplishment own deeds without expectations to the fruits and where both the deed and consequently the fruits are presented to the divine. The aid to society by organizations should not have any expectations back from society while implementing CSR programme but should be done in view to fulfill the requirement of the society. (Bhagavad-Gita 2.47)

Karmany evadhikaras te

Ma phalesu kadacana

Ma karma-phala-hetur bhur

Ma te sango 'stv akarmani

*i.e.* You have a right to accomplish your given duty, but you're not eligible to the fruits of deed. By no means ponder yourself the reason for the consequences of your actions, and do not get involved to not accomplishing your duty. (Bhagavad-Gita 3.20)

Karmanaiva hi samsiddhim

Asthita janakadayah Loka

sangraham evapi Sampasyan

kartun kartum arhasi

*i.e.* Rulers like Janaka attained supremacy merely by accomplishing the set duties. Hence, simply for the purpose of educating the people at large, you should accomplish your duty.

### **CSR by way of Karma Yoga with Indian outlook of soul in Karma (Deed)**

Karma yogi's significant qualities- Karma yogi accomplishes work for:

1. In search of spirit and intent with a emphasis more on the practice than the result,
2. With the purpose of unselfish service to public and the bigger society and
3. Concerning the effort as a submission to one's own higher self with which the person seeks to unite and accomplish a sense of self-actualization. Obviously these qualities in an employee would be extremely required for every business firm's achievement. Thus, Karma Yoga practice of would result in to benefits for the employee and the business firm as follow:

Job satisfaction, Individual development and satisfaction for the employee,

Improved productivity, Best quality achievement for the business.

### **Role of Bhagavad Gita in CSR**

Bhagavad Gita incorporate different theories in the arenas of philosophy, psychology, sociology, science etc. Nonetheless, merely few individuals realized its position in individual and professional life. It's nicely delineated the meaning and significance of Dharma. This leads to working in line with direction, rule, and truth. Social responsibility has four constituents as Global Social Responsibility (GSR), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) and Personal Social Responsibility (PSR). In the social responsibility literature, it is observed in the history that

only major research is done on CSR. The remaining three constituents of social responsibility are yet to be studied seriously. A conversation between Krishna and Arjuna emerged four types of Dharma, as Rita Dharma, Varna Dharma, Ashrama Dharma and Swa-Dharma, those are associated to the constituents of Social Responsibility. Muniapan, B., & Satpathy, B. (2013).

### **Dharmas, Social Responsibility and CSR**

**Rita Dharma:** One should essentially respect and obey the rules and regulations of this physical world. It's a highest duty of a every business firm to take care of the universe. Global Social Responsibility discusses the responsibility of the world. The responsibility of the business firm is to nourish all constituents of the universe.

**Varna Dharma:** which defines the firm's duty towards the government, society, and business. Varna Dharma is straight connected to CSR *i.e.* the wellbeing of the stakeholders of the business firm.

Business groups such as Tata, Mahindra, Bajaj, Reliance, Infosys and many international business groups are executing many CSR programmes for the society welfare.

Bhagavad Gita discusses four stages of Ashrama such as Brahmacharya; Grihastha; Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. It is supreme for every person to obey the rules for overall four stages of life. Thus, Ashrama Dharma is straight connected to ISR because it theorizes the individual responsibility that a person has to follow throughout the life. Finally, Swa-dharma, which discusses a dharma about oneself. This is the vital aspect of social responsibility since its outcome is self-development of a person. So, it is called as Personal Social Responsibility.

Each dharma tells the responsibility that a business firm and an individual have to accomplish. Bhagwad Geeta not only reveals the concept of CSR, but it surpasses the idea and suggests individual and individual social responsibility that the many people have to know while doing any action in anywhere on our earth.

### **Gandhiji's ideas of Swaraj (self-reliance)**

Mahatma Gandhi said, "My idea of village Swaraj is that is a thorough republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital needs, and however independent for several others in which dependence is essential. As far as possible, every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis" (Gandhi, (1973).

### **Trusteeship Theory**

The companions of Mahatma Gandhi Pyarelal, Kishoribhai and Naraharibhai conscripted a modest Trusteeship method, while they were in Aga Khan Palace detention camp and presented it to Mahatma Gandhi, and he made little modifications in it.

1. Trusteeship makes available a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into a democratic one. It provides no space to capitalism, but gives this owning class an opportunity of reforming themselves. It is supported the religion that attribute isn't beyond redemption.
2. 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.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
4. 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.
5. 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.

6. The variance between this, minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable, equitable and variable from time to time, as much so that the inclination would be towards elimination of the difference.
7. 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) as cited by Pulla, V. R., Nayak, V., & Walke, K. (2017).

Very few research scholars have associated Mahatma Gandhi's methodology to Western CSR theories. For example, Balasubramanian (2010), Gopinath (2005), and Upadhyaya (1976) emphasis on how Gandhi's trusteeship theories could be interpreted from individual level rules into principles supporting ethical governance and stewardship in present corporate business

### **Bajaj Group: Trusteeship application**

"May Goddess Laximiji grant me wisdom to carry on business with honesty, and grant me prosperity in business and to good sense to utilise it for benefit of country and the officiated people." Jammalal Bajaj. Deepawali Poojan 20th October 1922.

"The more I think, realise there was no activity of national interest in which Jammalalji was not involved." Mahatma Gandhi

Bajaj Group was established by Jammalal Bajaj in 1926.

"Bajaj Group believes that truth and full measure of growth, success and progress lies beyond balance sheets or conventional economic indices. It is best reflected within the difference that business and industry make to the lives of individuals."

Through its social investments, Bajaj Group fulfils the necessities of societies exist in in the surrounding of its facilities, taking sustainable initiatives in the areas of health, education, environment conservation, infrastructure and community development, and response to natural calamities or society, however, Bajaj is more than a corporate identity. It is a catalyst for social empowerment. It is the reason behind the smiles that light up a million faces.

Its goodwill resonates within the two simple words that sleep in the collective consciousness of Indians "Hamara Bajaj."

### **CSR Guiding Principles**

Mr. Rahul Bajaj (Chairman of the Bajaj Group), pronounced his experiences inheriting the trusteeship model that his grandfather, founder of the Bajaj Group, Jammalal Bajaj, and had learned from Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. Rahul Bajaj believed that companies are 'trustees of the people's money' and should act accordingly.

Speaking about the extensive history of charitable activities ongoing by the Bajaj Group, Rahul Bajaj highlighted that, 'there is no difference between our philanthropic initiatives and the CSR law,' stating that they have regularly spend more than 2% of their profits on their CSR activities.

He insisted business firms in India to reconsider their attitude to run business, stating that, "the objective of a business is to meet the expectations of, and satisfy, the customer." During his speech, he enunciated the significance of corporate ethics as principally associated to CSR.

"No amount of CSR expenditure justifies running a gaggle unethically," he said, adding, "It may be a tradition in India for the rich and powerful to assist the weak and poor." Alagappa, H. (2017).

The CSR programmes of Bajaj Group are directed by the vision and philosophy of its Founder Father, Jammalal Bajaj, who incorporated the principle of trusteeship in business and common good and set the foundation for ethical, value based and transparent working. The company has set up CSR

Committee on 28th March 2014. The primary features of CSR activities comprise ethical working, respect for stakeholders, and safeguard of human rights and care of the environment.

### **Education**

The Bajaj Education Initiative (BEI), a flagship scheme of Bajaj Auto Limited that is being implemented by Jankidevi Bajaj Gram Vikas Sanstha (JBGVS), focuses on improving quality of education in government and low cost private schools in Pune, specifically in Pimpri-Chinchwad area. During the reporting period, BEI has conducted 33 programmes across 110 schools, covering 4,390 students, 1,003 teachers and 888 parents, thereby covering a total of 6,281 beneficiaries. Forty e-learning kits were delivered all through the year, taking the cumulative number to 1,670.

As a part of BAL's commitment to market quality education for youngsters, various initiatives have benefitted quite 60,000 students in approximately 400 schools across Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. Bajaj Auto has also undertaken the upgrading of five Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) in the vicinity of its plants, under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Scheme. This has helped in significantly increasing the total strength of students at the ITIs.

### **Health**

The Bajaj YCMH ART (Anti Retro-Viral Therapy) Centre at Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial Hospital, Pimpri, Pune, has been in operation since August 2008, as a partnership for 5,000 ART patients between NACO, YCMH and BAL. Over the years, the Centre has provided treatment to fifteen ,288 patients, with a daily flow of quite 200 patients. The Kamalnayan Bajaj Hospital, which may be a charitable institute, extends services to Below poverty level (BPL) and Economically Weaker Section (EWS) patients. While the treatment for BPL patients is free, for EWS, it is subsidised to the extent of 50%. Till date, this scheme has benefitted 33,698 patients, with J 4.67 crore (approx.) spent thereon.

### **Environment and Water**

The Bajaj conservation Project covers around 103,938 Ha areas across the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

The purpose of these projects is to conserve about 172,594 TCM water through activities like nullah deepening, construction of check dams and percolation tanks. Phase-1 of this project has covered 51 villages and benefitted 17,435 families.

The Bajaj Majhi City Swachh City Initiative, which is collaboration between BAL, Centre for Applied Research and People's Engagement, and Aurangabad Municipal Corporation, aims to improve and enhance the solid waste management practices in 93 wards of Aurangabad city.

As a part of the Bajaj beverage Project, modern 'Community Managed Sustainable beverage Systems' are installed at 21 villages to supply safe and clean water of high quality, as per WHO, to underserved people in Latur, Solapur and Osmanabad districts of Maharashtra. Support to Welfare of Armed Force Veterans and Ex-Servicemen

Bajaj Auto Limited also supports the Paraplegic Rehabilitation Centre (PRC), Kirkee, Pune, a rehabilitation center intended for the after care and rehabilitation of personnel from India's defense forces.

This year, H 1.20 crore was contributed towards upgrading facilities at the Centre; this includes a bus, specially designed basketball wheelchairs, and a computer lab. BAL contributed H 1 crore

to the Kendriya Sainik Board's Armed Forces Flag Day Fund to support various welfare schemes run by them. Livelihood A project for livestock development, covering 27,500 families, has been launched in Uttarakhand; 50 livestock development centers will be established through the project and will make specific efforts to improve cattle breed and increase productivity.

A project on refining food and nutrition safety of rural societies through promotion of millets and nutrition gardens has been introduced in Uttarakhand.

This project also aims to create Women's Farmer Producer Companies and Farmer Federations for exploring the marketability of farm produce and farm based products. Other Development Activities

Rural development activities of JBGVS in 110 villages offered support across Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand which have impacted about 110,000 people. These activities consist of upgrading infrastructure, provision of healthcare facilities, and creation of livelihood enhancement opportunities. Also urban development activities of Samaj Seva Kendras offered support, which provides a platform to local communities, especially women and children, in urban areas near Bajaj Group facilities; these, included various programs on education, culture, sports, healthcare and vocational education.

Bajaj auto Safety and Disaster Management Department team attended to fire calls outside the plants for firefighting and rescue operations.

### **Bajaj Group Trusts**

For over a century now, much before the term 'CSR' found a place in corporate vocabulary, the Bajaj Group has been directly or indirectly contributing to social and economic development of communities in which we operate.

Operating through various public charitable trusts, Bajaj Group has been able to impact quality of life of the weaker sections of society across the country. More than 100 years ago, our Founder, Shri Jammalal Bajaj, an excellent visionary and philanthropist, took the unprecedented decision to use business to serve society. Succeeding generations have successfully taken his vision forward. Details of charitable activities carried out through Trusts:

1. Integrated rural development activities, rural transformation through model villages, and adoption of villages.
2. Formal and non-formal education through anganwadis, balwadis, schools, colleges, technical and management institutions, science centres, adult literacy programmes, etc. | Healthcare and community welfare through hospitals and medical research institutions to provide economically underprivileged access to top class and affordable healthcare.
3. Sustainable livelihood through integrated agriculture development, skill development and vocational training, self-help groups, farmer's co-operatives, programmes to uplift women, and women's empowerment.
4. Supporting art, culture and heritage.
5. Sports promotions and development.
6. Awarding and honouring people who have aligned themselves to community development through constructive programmes.
7. Contributing to sanitation and hygiene measures.
8. Ecological conservation, environment development, etc.

Category-wise summary of donations given by Trusts in FY 2017-18 is as follows:

Sr. No	Category of donations	Amount ( Rs. In Crore)
1	Education	11.50

2	Direct and Indirect Health (Medical)	6.22
3	Women and Child welfare	0.36
4	Economic Development	1.69
5	Social and environmental + Constructive program	4.32
6	Rural Development	0.27
7	Promoting Sports and cultural activities	8.45
	Total	32.8

## Conclusion

We have studied the trusteeship theory of Mahatma Gandhi, which summarizes his vision on corporate social responsibility. Mahatma Gandhi's trusteeship theory is important because they have influenced business firms in India.

The spirit of CSR can be summarised as self-control directing on discipline in perseverance, detachment from fruits of labour, and devotion to duty from the Bhagavad Gita,

We revealed that Mahatma Gandhi was one of the initial advocates of CSR and demonstrated how a foremost Indian corporation, the Bajaj Group, has had distinguished success in practicing trusteeship. It is observed that of Bhagavad Gita Karma yoga and Gandhian Trusteeship Theory has strong potential to enhance Corporate Social Responsibility in business firms in India.

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