

CEO as 'Karta' in an Organization: A Study of Jaipur Rugs Company, Jaipur, India

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This paper presents effects of compassion at work. The research is a case study of an organization named 'Jaipur Rugs' where the owner is able to influence the others through his selfless conduct, he could be compared to the concept of 'Karta' of joint Hindu Family. The first view presents a quantitative model, indicating that experienced compassion relates to employee and organizational outcomes. Through analysis of compassion real life examples, the second view reveals mechanisms through which compassion has its effects, uncovering how acts of compassion are cues for sense making about the self, co-workers, and the organization, a sense of pride, job security, mutual trust and Institutional Civic responsibility. Together, the two views provide evidence that acts of compassion at work create positive effects on personal as well as professional life. Jaipur Rugs could further be compared in many ways to the Gandhi's concept of Trusteeship. The question and thus the challenge is could it work in today's time globally for sustainable development?

Keywords: Compassion, Sense making, Positive Meaning, Positive Emotion.

This paper is an attempt at understanding the impact of values oriented leadership embedded in Indian ethos on the employee morale, motivation, commitment and identification with the organization. Specifically, this paper attempts at understanding behavior of an owner of a export house as 'Karta' who has changed life of 40,000 unorganized artisans of the industry through Compassion in the region of Gujarat and Rajasthan, India. A questionnaire was distributed to 160 employees of the Company and was supplemented by Incident Method along with in-depth interviews for the data collection.

The 'Karta' is a characteristic in the personality of a person, who heads the family in business context the organization; is able to influence the others through his conduct or behavior. The concept of 'Karta' is prevalent in Joint Hindu Family where the Head of the family shoulders all the responsibilities for the welfare of the family and enjoys absolute authority. The researcher never ever could imagine a person could be so powerful that he can influence the masses so effortlessly until she met Mr. N.K. Chaudhary, an entrepreneur, who is exporting rugs to US Market. This person, who owns a company worth Rs. 85 Crores; is living in a small house and taking care of all business needs as well as is responsible for changing lives of thousands.

As it is evident in the vision statement "*We look upon business not merely as a source of income or profit, but as a way of life, as a medium for putting our talents to good use, while at the same time affording us an opportunity to be of service to the community. Profits will follow. Let us remember that profit is not just a set of figures, but of values.*"

Community development, as his motto, he has inspired his team to extend help selflessly to the person in need. He is committed to improve the quality of professional life through personal attention and relentless efforts. His wife herself prepares the delicacies for the entire staff including labors on functions, she never forgets to distribute seasonal fruits and milk occasionally. Their teams visit villages to educate the workers. They train them to earn their respectable lively hood through training them in weaving skills.

The promising people are selected and groomed to be the leaders and deputed as regional in- charges of their respective areas. His daughter and son are personally involved to see that the business and community upliftment could be done together.

Most of the employees of the Jaipur Rugs are so influenced that they say that upliftment of the people has become the purpose of their life and they would not leave the organization in their lifetime.

Second aspect which could be witnessed was the kind of interpersonal trust the people were reposing. The culture of trust also emerged from the director (the owner) who is fondly known as 'Bhai Saheb' which means the elder brother. There is no restriction for any one to meet 'Bhai sahib' any time; there is no attendant in front of his office to restrict any body to meet him personally.

He along with his team visits villages, convince women to be self employed by becoming a carpet weaver and have a respectable life.

Sanju Kanwar, a Respondent, for Instance, States:

I used to read in books - how Cinderella was trapped in her house with her step sisters and mother. I used to wonder if she never felt the desire of being free. Though this is a fairy tale, yet the story implies to real life

situations. I hail from a Rajput community- a very conservative and male dominated section where females especially are not allowed to speak for their rights. The men of this community are the only decision makers, so what if a male is your younger brother or youngest son! If there is a male in the house, he is the sole decision – maker of everything.

I am 18 years old, an adult as per the constitution, yet not independent to take decisions on my own. I pursued my studies till eight standards in a nearby school. I had big dreams and fantasies to finish my schooling and to pursue higher studies. I was 14 then and my favorite subjects were Social Studies, Science, English and Math. When I topped my eight standard results, my mother was extremely pleased. She was so overwhelmed that she distributed sweets at every corner of our village (Abrasar, a village in Churu). That very day, my father returned from his work late in the evening. I could still sense my mother's excitement. My father was happy on hearing this news. He called me and said that he was a proud father. We had our dinner following which I started to get ready for the very next day. I was packing my bag when I could hear loud noises; the noises were coming from my parent's room. I went near to the door and could hear their voices clearly. My father said, "So what if she has topped her class. She is a girl. Till what level I need to invest in her studies? We don't have proper schools in our village too. And what will she do after studying. After marriage, she will be required to do the household work."

I could sense my mother's tears. She stood for me before him. She wanted to fulfill my desire of studying more. But with her tears I could see my dreams sulking too. I could then hear some foot steps coming towards the door..... "Enough of studies now, learn how to take care of household and groceries." I just looked into his eyes with tears and I could sense he felt the same..... "If you were a boy, things would have been different."

One day, on my way to a friend's house, I saw a group of people talking to women in our neighborhood. The group seemed well organized and educated. On joining the discussion, I realized that they were from a foundation, who wanted to empower women through carpet weaving...A few more girls from my village had a similar problem. Yet the foundation members (Jaipur Rugs Foundation) could easily convince the lot as it didn't involve the risk of earning outside homes and villages.

Very soon, we started with our carpet weaving training with the foundation. There were experts from different places like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal etc to teach us the skills.The day I received my first salary, I felt proud of it. I could sense power defining me, my ambitions and my confidence increased. When I showed this to my father, he felt overwhelmed! I gave half of the amount to him and half to my mother for household groceries. They looked at me with pride and couldn't stop adoring me!

Today, it has been a year and a half since I have been working as a carpet weaver and this has changed my life drastically. Until now I always overheard people saying how money enhances one's persona of living. And it is indeed true. I started with Rs. 2000 per month and now I earn Rs. 6000 per month. I give half of my earnings to my parents and the rest I save in a bank!

The contribution of Jaipur rugs and its CEO towards community service is phenomenal. He frequently visits the villages along with his family, listen to their problems, eat with them and motivate them to be self sufficient and live with pride.

Similarly at corporate office while the researcher interviewed around 60 people from different levels of the organization, it was interesting to know that the stories of compassionate act were remembered and echoed by every one there was no other person near to him in terms of awareness of his actions. The example of CEO forgiving an accountant who did forgery to make personal money was quoted by every person to whom so ever the researcher interacted.

Respondent quoted several stories of the act of kindness by the employees of the organization but the consequence in terms of pro social behavior was maximum of the CEO.

Employees wanted to imbibe the qualities of the CEO as their Role Model. Few employees even vouched that they will not change the organization in their life time. As the head of the family passes on the 'Samskara' to his successors similarly the culture is inculcated of humane management by the CEO of the organization.

The support and efforts made by the H.R Head to uplift one illiterate but talented peon to the post of carpet designer and copier was exemplary. Happiness, mutual trust and commitment were reported by the respondents.

The respondents also told that they feel highly secured under the guardianship of their '*Bhai-saheb*'. *The satisfaction and delight they felt because of doing good to others were evident. As aptly said by Dalai Lama I believe that the very purpose of life is to be happy. From the very core of our being, we desire contentment. In my own limited experience I have found that the more we care for the happiness of others, the greater is our own sense of well-being. Cultivating a close, warmhearted feeling for others automatically puts the mind at ease. It helps remove whatever fears or insecurities we may have and gives us the strength to cope with any obstacles we encounter. It is the principal source of success in life. Since we are not solely material creatures, it is a mistake to place all our hopes for happiness on external development alone. The key is to develop inner peace.*

Dalai Lama quotes (Head of the Dge-lugs-pa order of Tibetan Buddhists, 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, b.1935)

The researcher found that the employees had a sense of pride for being associated to the organization. During an interview a new employee in accounts department told that she feels she has taken a right decision to join this organization, she is proud to be associated with the organization which holds human dignity above all. Similar kind of response was received from other employees also.

Another thing which was noticed that the employees identified themselves very strongly with the organization. All meetings are done on Carpet; every body including CEO sits on carpet, irrespective of their hierarchy. This philosophy has interwoven the waft and weft of entire fabric of the organization as beautifully and strongly as their carpet itself.

Third observation which needs to be mentioned is that the employees had a very high sense of job security and job contentment.

Fourth observation which worth mentioning is that the organization though being relatively young has a pro social organizational behavior and a negligible employee turnover .This is commendable for the organization.

Fifthly most of the employees found work as fun and did not mind staying long hours in the company of their 'Bhai Saheb'. When enquired they told "since our work improve lives of hundreds, for us it has become more of a mission than an employment".

Sixthly the organizational commitment was found very high especially among the illiterate and / or unorganized skilled labors, who consider Mrs. Chaudhary (Wife of Mr. N.K.Chaudhary) as their sister. They told researcher that they would go to any extent for the upliftment of the organization. They further told that they do not intent to leave the organization even in their dreams.

Seventhly it was seen that there was a special kind of bonding (both inter departmental and intra departmental) among employees.

Most of them were seen excited to share the glories of their CEO because the organization has earned several awards and recognitions for their quality and designs. The organization has also managed to earn good profits from overseas and deployed the money back for the betterment of the employees and unorganized weavers of Gujarat and Rajasthan.

While at the end of preparing the paper, the researcher started thinking as to how similar the leadership, values orientation and philanthropic outlook of the CEO and his organization are to the concept of Trusteeship as propounded, propagated and practiced by Mahatma Gandhi. The promoter of a Company or an organization is not its owner having unbridled right of using its assets for his own benefits and interests, Instead, he is its Trustee- thereby implying that he is custodian and guardian of its assets to be used for the good of its employees and society at large, This concept was practiced by textile industry in Gujarat during the early part of the preceding century under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi.

To conclude Jaipur Rugs has a very different comfortable, soothing environment, with no compromise with work quality and efficiency. It has registered an impressive growth rate of 35% this year. Most of the employees are influenced by the CEO and put an extra effort to improve theirs and others professional and personal lives. The Jaipur Rugs model perhaps needs to be looked into carefully with reference to its desirability and applicability in work situations in the country - and abroad.

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