

# Importance of Jain values in Shaping Business ethics

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Right Faith; Right -Knowledge and Right Conduct, Code of Conducts as in Svetambara Yoga Sastra.

## Abstract

## Introduction

Jainism is a religion with core scientific base and ethical practices. Religious practice of the Jain values in day-to-day curriculum can effectively build a strong business ethical structure. The twelve vows (anuvrats) -Non-violence; Truthfulness; Chasity; Non-stealing; Non-possessiveness; Limitation of directional movement; Limitation of areal movement; Avoidable activities; Equanimity; Specific fasting; Limiting consumables and non-consumables and Hospitality, plays an important role in shaping Right values- Right Faith; Right -Knowledge and Right Conduct. Performing commercial activities in right ways can build an ethical work culture leading to a corruption free business activity, which will ultimately lead to a healthy, wealthy, and wise nation.

## Keywords

Jainism, Business ethics, twelve vows- Non- violence, Chasity; Non-stealing, Non-possessiveness; Limitation of directional movement; Limitation of areal movement; Avoidable activities; Equanimity; Specific fasting; Limiting consumables and non-consumables and Hospitality; three-fold path-

An extensive review of literature has unfolded many untold facts. Shah's (2007) work on Jain Business Ethics gave a motivational factor for pursuing this research. The focus of this paper is on a particular area and part i.e., religious value of Jains community. The paper highlights how till today this community could manage to carry forward their business legacy. This paper also critically examines the present scenario of the community and the impact of westernization and ignorance of the ancient values. The world economic order is changing rapidly due to the advancement of science and technology. Due to the process of globalisation and technological explosion, business round the globe is facing global challenges of survival, change, and competition. The present world is faced with many urgent problems-political, economic, educational, social, and cultural due to deterioration of values. Also, the world-wide clamour for ensuring ethical business practices in the post melt down phase must not escape our attention while the relevance of values from the viewpoint of sustainable growth of business can hardly be debated upon, "the question by and

large has remained unanswered is...Where from the value would come?"

Values are aspirational moral principles guiding conduct. Values extend deeper and further than conducts, making up the unseen, unspoken foundation that supports the entire structure of the organization. Values have a cognitive dimension-human values, universal values, social values, moral values, educational values, religious values. Followers of Jain philosophy practice five vows in their life per the choice (of limitations) of the practitioner. A layperson follows these vows partially, the vows are -अहंसा (Non-violence), सत्य (Truthfulness), अचौयय (Non-stealing), ब्रह्मचयय (Chastity), परमण (Limited non-possessiveness). Absolute level of these vows is observed by saints and nuns in Jain sects. Limited level of these vows observed by a common household person is the focus of our study. If this micro system of a Jain layperson's life style is adopted by the mankind at macro level then the whole world may achieve the target of an economy of satisfied consumers through the path of managerial excellence. Some may object that अपरिग्रह (the concept of non-possessiveness) may stop the growth of businesses as it may bring the level of buying motivation down. While on the contrary non-possessiveness will make the economy produce useful products and services only. Modern business strategies are working towards consumerism which is giving birth to an unrest in the society

Religion, for most people serves as an important value-source. A person's perception or sense of what is right or what action is appropriate is often shaped by the religious doctrines or belief that he or she holds. Religious scriptures and established norms play a decisive role in shaping the values of most individual. Nonetheless, there are other sources of values (like parental upbringing, peer's influence or education) that also have their role in guiding or prompting human action and behaviour. Among all these values, a question arises as "how much weight is to be assigned to religion as a value- sources, vis-à-vis other sources?".

The question assumes added significance as in many cases, it is found that practiced or applied value-set of a person are not in consonance with the religious dictates. The dissonance is obvious particularly in the domain of business on issues like pricing, promotional practices, employee-welfare, or tax-related issues and the like. This further give rise to another question, "Are we, driven by pragmatism adopting a piecemeal approach to value (thereby separating business values from human or religious values) or should value be a holistic framework. The need for the re-exploration of the role of religion as a value-sources arises only in the given context that provide the backdrop of the study.

### Business values

In management business values is an informal term that includes all forms of values that determines the health and wealth of the firm in the long run. Business values determines the general principles of appropriate conduct for a

firm or business entity that enables them to do what is right for the society, customer, supplier, channel partner and other entities related to the business.

## Religious values

Religious values are ethical principles founded in religious, tradition text and beliefs. Religious values are based on scriptures and religion's established norms. Religious values define what people expect of themselves and of others based on the beliefs common to the religions they practice. Such values represent the core principles that guide daily decision making. They help people determine which actions to take, and to make judgments about right or wrong and good or bad. The world's most practiced religions often have similar values, although variations exist in the way some values are prioritized over others.

## Jain values

Jain values are not different from human values, but they contain a quite different set of values which are not found in other religions. Right from its inception Jainism has built up some principles of conduct for aligning their activities in proper way. These principles are based on what is right and ought to be done and what is wrong for the well-being of all.

The three jewels of Jains are Right faith, Right knowledge, and Right conduct. These three jewels are stated in Tattvartha Sutra, one of oldest sacred texts of Jainism.

Faith –value system and proper perception (Samyag darsana)

Knowledge-analysis, information, insight and research (Samyag jnaana)

Conduct-following the value system and impressing others of the value system (Samyag charitra)

- Ahimsa means non-violence, something that is common in most faith traditions. However, for Jains, Ahimsa starts from the mind, and the non-violence has to be lived in thought, word and deed.
- Asateya & Satya encourages Jains to be truthful and honest in their actions, and not steal that, which belongs to others. Integrity and sincerity are very critical to their conduct and character. Often their business philosophy is win-win rather than win-lose.
- The principle of Aparigraha explains that possessiveness and materialism are the root causes of human bondage and prevent us from realizing true spiritual freedom and liberation. In fact, greed is seen by Jains as a form of violence, as its nature is exploitative. Although, the Jains are less than 1% of India's population, they are known to give more than 50% of all charitable donations in India. For them, business is an occupation, not a pre-occupation, and charity is a natural outlet for business success.

- ‘Limitation of directional and areal movement’ means restriction in unnecessary movement. The motto of these vows is to reduce the possibilities of committing violence, thereby preventing any injuries to living being.
- The other vows, equanimity, specific fasting, limiting consumables and non-consumables and hospitality are educative in nature. These vows cultures and educate one’s soul for leading a better life.

### Research Problem

- Is Jain philosophy having a systematic set of business ethics?
- Where are these ethics found in Jain literature?
- Can these ethics work as control tools for an ethical economy?
- Are they relevant in modern business problem solutions?

### Scope of the Study

The study focuses on business ethics found in five small vows of a Jain layperson. Though Jain literature is a treasure of ideas on ethics, but the author has limited her study to five small vows – Truth, non-violence, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-possessiveness. Jain view on these five issues has been studied in the paper.

### What is Business Ethics?

Philosopher William Lillie defines ethics as the normative science of the conduct of human

beings living in the society science which judges this conduct to be right or wrong, good or bad etc. When the term business is attached to it, the two terms collectively stand for right and wrongs of the businesses. Hence, we can say that Business ethics define code of conduct of human beings operating the business in an economy. According to S. Shyama Prasad, “The purpose of business is not simply to go on amassing wealth endlessly. Albeit profit making or wealth maximisation is a goal of every business but, it is not the end. Money is the means to achieve something higher. Business should be driven by the motive of the welfare of the entire nation or at least of the society in which the business operates. However, despite varied opinions regarding the profit maximization motive of the organisations, there is a general agreement amongst the thinkers, academics, and business managers that the business functions with the sanction of the society and hence they need to keep in mind the interest of at least the society, if not the entire mankind.”

### Jaina Theory of Business Ethics

Jaina Theory of Business Ethics is primarily a part of the quest of righteousness in businesses. The theory arrives at a consistent system of business principles that appear to be self-evident. Shyama Prasad advocates that there is nothing wrong in an organisation seeking to make profit. However, when it makes substandard products or uses unfair means to gain market share or ignores its responsibility towards environment or goes out to destroy the competitors, it is unethical. As Mahatma Gandhi said, the world has enough for everyone is need but not for anyone’s greed. This statement of

Mahatma Gandhi seems to be based on his Jaina knowledge.

### Truth and Business Ethics

In the vow of truth two violations carrying the element of law are : These two restrictions in the conduct of a श्रावक(Jain lay man) may stop all forgeries and keep the economy free of any sort of unrest. Truth is accepted as an essence of values in all religious philosophies but in Jainism all the vows are observed at three levels- 1. By thought (मन) 2. By speech (वचन) and 3. By actions (काया). Truth in speech and heart is responsible for social balance in economic and non-economic environment of businesses. Each and every vow of these five has a set of five flaws attached with them .We are mentioning only those in which we see some elements of business ethics. In the vow of truth such two flaws are: मोसोवयसे(not to make false statements)and कूडले करणे(no false documentation). These two restrictions in the conduct of a businessman may stop all forgeries and keep the economy free of any sort of unrest. All these restrictions on the actions of a layman establish proper documentation and fair measurement in businesses. In modern economies improper and false documentation is emerging as a major crime, which is emerging as a major problem in modern economies. The only solution to these economic problems is in this ethical approach to documentation. This solution can be the root of an ethical and transparent economy.

### Jains

Jainism is said to be one of the oldest living religions in the world whose origin is still

in speculation. The name Jainism came from 'jina' meaning victory in Sanskrit. The 24th Tirthankara, Mahavira expounded the religious, philosophical, and ethical teaching of Jainism. Jains are grouping community as well as follower of Jain tenants and principles of 24 Tirthankara. Jain society is organized into more than 200 jnati (small groups) and 100 major groups in Svetambara and 80 groups in Digambar. The Jains basically hail from a place in Rajasthan named 'Marvad' or 'Mewar' and so they are popularly also known as Marwaris or Rajasthani.

### Non-Voience and Business Ethics

The element of non-violence (Ahimsa) establishes Jainism as an environment friendly philosophy. Water, fire, air, soil, all these elements of natural environment are considered alive and as per the vow of non-violence, no harm is done to these natural elements. Such an approach towards natural resources helps to save resources for the future and will help inhuman life security and continuity. Five flaws of this vow are बधे िं - If I hurt someone by tying him tight (meaning kept someone in prison etc.), वे (If I inflicted pains and injuries to someone), छहवच्छेए (If I injured someone physically or cut some part of the body), अइभारे - If I overloaded someone (with workload or weight etc.), भत्तनाणहवच्छेए (Stopped someone from taking food and water). These five when applied to human resource or employees in an organization, they simply match with the requirement of an efficient human resource management approach. बधे िं stands for not keeping the employees as slaves, वे stands for life security of employees at work place, छहवच्छेए means not hurting the employees

physically at work, अईभारे means overload in physical sense and excess workload for employees beyond their capacity, भ तपाण हवच्छे ए stands for basic needs of employees in terms of lunch break etc.

### Importance of Jain values

For the purpose the study, an in-depth survey of literature is followed pertaining to the topic. A well-known business analyst and writer, Timberg (1978) has traced the origin of Marwaris and Jains and how they got into business from traders. From an elaborate case study method, Timberg traced the footprints of many successful Marwari traders shifting to industrial entrepreneurship during that era. Timberg and Das (2014), through an investigative study of the life history of some of the giant business tycoons like Jagath Seth, G.D, Birla, shows how the Marwaris rely on a centuries old system for conserving and growing capital which catapulted them in a good position along with a strong sense of business.

The Jains are the oldest living vegetarian community on the planet. When a community respects all living beings, its natural characteristic becomes humility and simplicity, allowing space and freedom for all to coexist. Also, this has led to restrictions in the trades that Jains can pursue as they cannot partake in any business which involves animal products.

Jains believe that man should be a master of his senses, not a slave to them. Hence Saiyam or self-discipline and self-control are very important, and this is widely acknowledged as a key ingredient of successful leadership.

Tapas or restraint in eating is also a very critical virtue. Regular fasting (no food allowed, only water) is encouraged, with eight-day fasts during the holy festival of Paryushan being very common. The aim of this is to control greed and hunger, and also purify the soul for liberation. Profit is not the overriding aim; quality service, workmanship and discipline are vitally important. Business is a means to serve society and, if possible, uplift it.

The trade or the professions, Jains choose to pursue are determined by their values. They avoid 'the meat industry or anything that is directly or indirectly connected to the killing of animals. They tend to specialize in trading businesses, import/export, wholesaling and retailing. A lot of business is conducted on the basis of relationship and trust, avoiding the need for expensive lawyers and contracts.

Real essence of any business lies in its success and sustainability history. Jains, being one of the pioneering, successful business giants led the foundation and basic principles for business ethics. Knowing or unknowingly they imbibe these values from their religion. Their religious doctrines and values led them to realise the theoretical knowledge into practical application. Nathmal Tatia has very beautifully translated one the verse from "Tattvartha-sutra, the motto of Jainism is "live and let live" with mutual win-win strategy. It applies to all, be it nature, human entity, material values, emotions, monetary benefits. Implication of these beliefs provides a strong and sustainable business relation.

## Code of Conduct in Svetambara Yoga Sastra

There are 35 code of conducts mentioned in Svetambara Yoga Sastra. Among these conducts, 29 of them very precisely showcases and explains the ethical aspects of business:

- Be honest in earning wealth.
- Be appreciative of the conduct of the virtuous.
- Be apprehensive of sin.
- Fulfil the three-fold aim of life.
- To make spiritual progress (dharma).
- To achieve proper material end (artha).
- To enjoy life in proper manner (kaama).
- Follow the custom of the country in which one lives.
- Not to denigrate other people, particularly governments.
- Live in an appropriate place with good neighbours.
- Aim for high moral standards.
- Avoid places where disaster or troubles occur frequently.
- Not to engage in a reprehensible occupation.
- Live within one's means; treat wealth as a trust to be managed according to Jain tenets.
- Dress according to one's income.
- Be diligent in supporting ascetics, the righteous and the needy.
- Always strive to be free of evil motives and be favourably inclined to virtue.
- Avoid actions which are inappropriate to the time and place; be aware of one's own strengths and weaknesses.
- Venerate persons of high morality and discernment.
- Support one's dependent.
- Be far-sighted, visionary, and aim to succeed in whatever one does.
- Be discriminating in all matters.
- Be grateful when gratitude is called for.
- Try to be well liked.
- Be motivated by a sense of shame.
- Be compassionate.
- Be gentle in disposition.
- Be ready to render services to others.
- Be in control over the sensory organs.

All these values highlighted above have a practical structure rather than just a religious belief. The economic trend and lifestyle can be lined up in ethical foundation with these codes of conducts.

### Development of Jain Entrepreneurs in Present Era

Since literacy among Jains had deeper roots from ancient period and during 20th century the Jains have taken the full advantage of modern education system the occupational rigidities appears to have paved the way and now a days Jains started big industries and entered into a wide

variety of professions and services besides trade and commerce. Now a days the Jain entrepreneurs in the form of traders, money lenders, exporters, importers and big industrialists spread all over India and at global level and business transactions of major cities of India are dominated by Jain entrepreneurs including Bangalore. Apart from this we can find Jain entrepreneurs in the area of management of state enterprise, Judiciary, medicine manufacturing, Running Educational institutions and Hospitals, IT Sector, political life and Running Social Media in different parts of India.

### **If agriculture cannot be undertaken by Jains, then isn't it hypocritical that we eat agricultural produce?**

It is a total misconception to say that agriculture cannot be undertaken by Jains. Jainism does not forbid agriculture as such.

Jainism expressly mentions 15 type of highly sinful activities (karmadaan) that entail enormous amount of himsa of Tras Jivas (two sense to five sense living-beings) and should not be taken up by Jain shrawaks. Agriculture is not one of these. A farmer works in the field to feed us. His activity cannot be called sinful.

The first Tirthankar Lord Rishabhdev himself taught the skill of agriculture to the mankind as the impact of 'kalpavrikshas' had started dwindling and people could not get their needs fulfilled from them. If agriculture was such a sin, he would not have taught this skill.

Many of the staunch followers of Lord Mahavira, including Anand Shrawak, were engaged in

agriculture.

If agriculture is not permitted, the alternate means of food will be primarily meat which is obviously not at all permitted in Jainism.

The opposition to agriculture mainly comes from the fact that it entails more himsa than many other trades or professions. Therefore, the general perception is that if one has a choice or if it is not a compulsion, then why not avoid it.

What Jainism says is that we should try to avoid or minimise himsa. Whatever we do, we should use due caution and commonsense to ensure that, to the extent possible, there is minimum himsa. Ultimately it is your intention, your conduct and your object of doing a particular activity that is more important than the activity itself.

It would, therefore, be wrong to say that Jainism forbids agriculture as such. However, if you want to do farming only for pleasure or as a hobby, then you should consider whether it is worth, as it would certainly involve avoidable himsa.

### **Jainism View on Dairy Products.**

Jainism is an introspective religion and there are no "thou shalt" commandments in Jainism. Jainism provides a set of values/principles and guidelines on how we can apply them in our day-to-day life. It is up to each one of us to understand and internalize these values/principles and apply them mindfully in various aspects of our lives like how to consume and preserve natural resources, how to follow



right ethics, what we should eat/not eat, wear/not wear, integrity with work and finance etc.

Being vegetarian is just not enough from Ahimsa mindset, since consumption of dairy and other animal byproducts are considered equally high order of sin (Himsa) as consuming direct animal products (E.g. meat and other non-vegetarian food). Great deal of suffering is caused to animals in the dairy industry. While, Ahimsa teaches us that every living being (Animals included) has the right to life and freedom. Cows love their children just like us. They deserve to be safe and free from harm just like us. They have a capacity to experience grief or joy just like us. So why make them suffer?

Now the agricultural production in the world is such a level that it can feed the human population several times over. There is no shortage of vegetarian food in the world. Milk and other dairy products are not needed for our healthy survival.

In addition to Ahimsa principle, Mahavir Swami also preached Samvar and Nirjara. In Nirjara, he explained six bahiya tapa, which includes that a Jain should practice “Ras Tyag”. They should not consume juicy food like milk, yogurt, butter, ghee, oil etc., since it affects human mind and makes it lazy and sleepy which is a hindrance to meditation or one’s spiritual progress.

Jain Agam literature (scripture) consist of 65% stories and remaining 35% include Karnanuyoga (geography, Karma philosophy, gunasthanak etc.), conduct or Achar (six Avashyak, Pratikraman, Samayik, Vows and

Repentance), and Philosophy or Dravyanuyog which include Jain philosophy of pure souls and impure souls.

The main purpose of the Jain stories is to explain Jain principles and conducts. And the significant portion of stories are created (mythology) by the author using the name of the historical personalities. But one should not derive the Jain principles or Jain conducts out of the story.

One such story is that Mahavir ate kheer (milk-based food item) in his first Parna (fast breaking Tapa). Hence many Jains do ask the question that what’s wrong with drinking milk if Mahavira ate kheer?

There is no Jain principle or Jain conduct described by Lord Mahavir that indicates to drink milk and consume dairy products. On the contrary his teaching of Nirjara bahiya tapa (ras tyag) and ahimsa says to refrain from consumption of milk and dairy products, as explained above.

### **Jains and Their Contributions to Indian Economy**

Jains are the richest religious community, with more than 70% of their population in the top quintile. Despite 0.06% of total world’s population and 0.4% of total Indian population; Jain community has been among the most contributing community of Indian economy. Jain community has the highest literacy rate at 94.1% above the national average of 65.38% and work participation among males is also the highest at 55.2%. They have the highest female literacy rate, 90.6% compared with the national average of

54.16%. Jains bagged 7 padmabhushana out of 104 awardees. It is also believed that the jains have the highest per capita income in India. And 0.4% population accounts for 24% of income tax exchanger.

- Jains contribute 24% of total income tax.
- Richest community in India.
- Own more than 28% Indian property.
- Contribute 25% of India's GDP growth.
- Most of the leading news papers are owned by Jains.
- Contribute 62% of total charity fund
- Run 12,000 out of 16,000 Goshalas
- More than 50,000 temples in India with maximum Trithdham.
- Jains are less than 1% of India's population.
- 46% India's stock brokers are Jains.
- Most literate community in India.
- 20% of total exports from Indian Private Sector are contributed by Jains.
- 20% of Indian real estate and construction industry is contributed by Jains.
- 33% of Indian gold and Jewellery industry is contributed by Jains.
- 50% Of Indian diamond industry is contributed by jains.
- 20% of Indian pharmaceutical company is owned by Jains.

- 20% of Indian textile Industry is contributed by Jains.
- 30% of Indian airline industry is contributed by Jains.
- 20% of Indian private power and electricity industry is contributed by Jains.
- 15-20% of Indian retail and wholesale industry is contributed by Jains.
- 20-25% of Indian media industry is contributed by Jains.

### Recommendation and Suggestion

Last two decades of India has witnessed many turmoils in corporate as well as in business area. After liberalisation, although Indian economic statics has shown a positive graph but also many scams, unethical practices, money laundering and such negative activities are growing rapidly. There are many reasons owing to this as increasing greediness, rapid success, increasing competition, more diversification, people losing value base business practices and many more. Thus, to combat with all this unhealthy practices, implementation, and practice of Jain ethical code of conducts are essentially needed. Jainism asks us to subdue our passion and always act with mindfulness and caution. The ignorance of these ethical rules results in individual and national crime.

If a Jain system of business ethics is implemented then future managers of modern businesses can bring out a harmonious blend of our religious values with the modern management style to head a transparent, peaceful, and content economy. In the age of globalization, we must

reaffirm faith in Indian ethos. The ethical principles of Jainism prescribe a code of conduct, which requires an individual to be an ideal person with nonviolence as the foundation of his life not only from the Indian context but also universally in this 21st century.

## Conclusion and Finding

The Jaina theory has given a special direction to the evolutionary theories of business ethics. Strong ethics in business with strict implementation system for a Jain follower have the capacity to influence our business environment and taking towards the road of ethical business. The focus on good intention may bring harmony and transparency in the economy if applied in businesses. If this micro system of a Jain layperson's lifestyle is adopted by the population at macro level, then the whole world may achieve the target of an economy of satisfied consumers through the path of managerial excellence.

The Jain concept and theories have a practical importance in shaping and structuring a strong ethical business model. Jainism not just propagate the ultimate liberation path but also shows the roadways and direction for the same. The paper brings out and highlights the micro threads that can mould the economic structure in ethical foundation. Practice and implication of these concepts can gradually bring spiritual, mental, physical, and economic upliftment in holistic manner.

Jain's as well as non-Jain is till now has not realised these concepts in in-depth form. A proper channelization and realisation for

implementation of these conducts has become a need for the present generation. For developing a healthy, wealthy, and sustainable business foundation, one has to have a concert code of structure and better understanding of the same.

In India Jain community is in special place because of its uniqueness. Most of the factors mentioned in the article are special and surprising to other communities of India. Some of the principle, Jains follow in their life, which makes them rich and prosperous. This research article will be concluded by the words of Bill Gates (Founder of Microsoft corporation), "If you are born poor it's not your mistake, but if you die poor it's your mistake".

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