

# **Social Consciousness in Jainism**

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**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL FOR JAIN STUDIES  
&  
NEW BHARATIYA BOOK CORPORATION**

*Published by :*

**New Bhartiya Book Corporation**

208, 2nd Floor, Prakashdeep Building,

4735/22, Ansari Road, Daryaganj,

New Delhi-110002

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First Edition : 2014

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ISBN : 81-8315-234-1

: 978-81-8315-234-1

Printed by :

**Jain Amar Printing Press**

New Delhi

## Preface

Jainism is projected as an ascetic religion only. It is often said by non-Jain scholars that it is very difficult to practice Jain way of life in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most Jains however believe that Jainism, with its four-fold organization of followers, provides a very positive, meaningful and practical approach for Jains to live a peaceful, happy, prosperous and socially sensitive and involved community life. In order to further explore this theme International School for Jain Studies, in association with leading universities of India and Canada, organized a series of national seminars (in ten major cities /Jain centres in India) & in Ottawa, Canada. These seminars were held in the months of February-March, 2010 in India and in August, 2010 in Canada as per following schedule:

Place	Institution	Date	Coordinator
Jaipur	University of Rajasthan	16 <sup>th</sup> February	Prof. Kusum Jain
Nagpur		18 <sup>th</sup> February	Dr. Mrs. Manju Jain
Mumbai	University of Mumbai	21 <sup>st</sup> February	Prof. Meenal Katarnikar
Mumbai	K.J. Somaiya	22 <sup>nd</sup> February	Dr. Geeta Mehta
Bangalore	Jain University	24 <sup>th</sup> February	Prof. N. Choodamani
Chennai	University of Chennai	26 <sup>th</sup> February	Prof. Priyadarshana Jain
Indore	Kund Kund Gyanpeeth	28 <sup>th</sup> February	Dr. Anupam Jain
Varanasi	Parshwanath Vidyapeeth	5 <sup>th</sup> March	
Moradabad	TMU	7 <sup>th</sup> March	Prof. R. K. Mittal
Delhi	Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidya-peetha	8 <sup>th</sup> March	Prof. Veer Sagar Jain
Ottawa	University of Ottawa	27 <sup>th</sup> August	Prof. Anne Vallely

ISJS invited papers from scholars, Jain community leaders, heads of Jain Social organizations and practitioners associated with Jain studies. They were asked to send their papers on any one or more topics indicated below:

**A. Jain doctrinal principles and their applications in social life**

- Tirathankaras and their social reforms.
- Ahinsa and its applications in social implementation (compassion /friendship/forgiveness / tolerance/ equality etc (jiyo aur Jino do, parasparopragraha jivanam etc as given in Jain texts).
- Anekanta and its applications for conflict resolution and social harmony, human rights, animal rights, organization & management etc
- Aparigraha as a concept to enhance cooperation amongst fellow beings. Limitation of wants /consumption etc, charity and social uplift. Some associated concepts are sanyama, sanvara, dana
- Abstinance and its role in social life. An exploration of the observance of essential duties and minor vows as prescribed for householders, their interpretation for social harmony and personal development
- Doctrine of karma and its relationship with purposeful and socially beneficial activities. Exploration of the emphasis on duty above right, on obligation rather than grace. Concept of free will and freedom.
- Concept of penance with special reference to food intake, modesty, service, repentance, meditation and self study etc.
- Daily Jains prayers /contemplations etc.

**B. Contributions of Jains and Jain doctrine to activities of social, economic and cultural importance.**

- Seeds for the development of Science / technology / Mathematics / Biology / Medicine.
- Art, temples, literature
- Health, education, economy, organization and management of business, governance and ecology
- Social services such as child / destitute care / rest homes /
- Community building and peaceful resolution of social conflicts

### C. Case studies

- Significant institutions / individuals engaged in activities at A. (e.g. FJEL, Mahavir Vikanka, Educational societies of Maharashtra and elsewhere running several hundred schools, Shrawanbelgola; Bhamasha, Chamunda Rai, Chandragupta Maurya, Kharvela; Jain prime ministers in Jaipur dynasty, Six CMs of MP, D S
- Kothari, Sarabhai, Walchand etc)
- Contributions by Jains in regions like South or specific state, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Bundelkhand, Jharkhand, MP etc.)

### D. Statistical reports/presentation

- Census figures to establish numbers and uniqueness of Jains
- Institutions and contributions
- Demographic and sociological studies

Needless to say, a large number of papers and abstracts were received for presentation at these seminars. Some of these papers were directly relevant to the proposed theme, and were of appropriate length as well. Academic standard of the articles had also to be taken into account. With these considerations in mind 17 articles were selected for the present anthology. They represent numerous aspects of social consciousness ranging from education, health care, social welfare and value system to architecture, ecology and even end-of-life care.

Organizing these seminars at different places was a mammoth task. During the course of organizing the seminars we incurred the debt of a number of people, especially the coordinators of the seminars. We sincerely express our gratitude to all of them. We are also thankful to all the contributors of articles contained in this volume.

We also thank the scholars who presented very good papers in these seminars but the same could not be included here due to management constraints. A note of thanks is due to Dr. Anne Vallye of the University of Ottawa who organized the international seminar at her university. Thanks are also due to ISJS staff, particularly Mr. Sushil Jana, who presently did all word processing and electronic compiling of the seminar proceedings.

**Shugan C. Jain**

New Delhi

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