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SPIRITUAL VALUES IN JAINISM : AN ECO ETHICAL PRACTICE ENHANCING
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The most prosperous nations in the world are not necessarily those with a high GDP but those with happy, healthy and free citizens. In dealing with the basic problems of sustainable development and establishing the peaceful society of equality, the spiritual values in Jainism and Jain way of life is a unique code of ethical scientific virtues in the frame of universal and individual responsibility.

The most of important aspects of its application is that it can be practiced by persons of any religion without deviating from their religious practices. Jain way of life style having non-violence, non-possessiveness and non-absolutism with flexible application as per the time, place and circumstances is an effective approach to sustainable development. The purpose of this paper is to understand the relationship between spiritual values and sustainable development. This paper is based on secondary data taken by related research articles, documents and books of various Jain scholars, sociologists etc.

Keywords- *Spiritual Values, Non-Violence, Non-Possession, Sustainable Development, Non-Absolutism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of "sustainable development" has emerged in a United Nations Conference held on 25th September 2015. An agenda has been adopted to achieve 17 goals of sustainable development by 2030. The concept of sustainable goals was first considered in a U.N. Conference held in 2012 at Rio.

The United Nations Development Project (UNDP) administrator Helen Clark summarized the sustainable development as "This agreement marks an important milestone in putting our world on an inclusive and sustainable course. If we all work together, we have a chance of meeting citizens' aspirations for peace, prosperity and wellbeing and to preserve our planet".

In addition to three dimensions of sustainable development, there is a fourth dimension 'a shared vision of ethical and spiritual values that inspires and guides cooperative action for change'. Achieving the environmental, economic and social goals associated with sustainability requires worldwide collaboration, which is not possible without shared values. The vision of a sustainable future as an inclusive social and ecological ideal that is good, right and just is needed to inspire strong commitment and drive change. Values give us the knowledge for growth, development, accomplishment and never ending progress. Values are spiritual skills that direct our energies to every higher levels of accomplishment.

Sustainable development is based on the following five major factors whose success and failure determine the sustainability of sustainable development. These factors are:

- i) Economic Development.
- ii) Ecological Balance
- iii) Equality Feeling
- iv) Emotional Maturity
- v) Educational Elevation

These five factors have very tough challenges to convert the discussion dream into realistic renaissance. Jainism's Philosophy can serve as a feasible solution package to convert the roadblock of sustainability into the stepping stones by nurturing the confidence and atmosphere for peaceful survival.

Jain Code of Conduct:**The Five Vratas :**

- 1) Nonviolence in thought, word and deed.
- 2) To seek and speak the truth.
- 3) To behave honestly and never to fake any by force or theft.
- 4) To practice restraint and Chasity in thought, word and deed.
- 5) To practice non acquisitiveness.

Jainism is a life style of values which is alternative to the ideology of consumer society. It is characterized by the virtues of Non-violence, Non-possession, Non-absolutism and Equality of each soul, which balance the Internal happiness along with socio-eco harmony. Its philosophy educates, train and motivate the life style to limit the strive for power and desires within the circumscribe of availability.

The one of the great psycho-economic principal contributed by Jain philosophy is the principal of non-possession. It can also be termed as principal of economic humanity as it teaches disassociation of attachment with the available resources and to act like a custodian for the same. This principal includes avoiding hoarding of things in excess of requirement and hence can serve an effective measure to handle the current crucial problems of profiteering and high inflation.

Spiritual ValuesIn Jainism

The Jain Tradition which enthroned the philosophy of ecological harmony and non-violence as it flourished for centuries side-by-side with other schools of thought in ancient India. The ecological philosophy of Janinism which flows from its spiritual quest has always been central to its ethics, aesthetics, art, literature, economics and politics. It is represented in all its glory by the 24 Jinas or Tirthankars of this era whose example and teachings have been its living legacy through millennia.

- **Ahimsa (Non Violence)**

The jain ecological philosophy is virtually synonymous with the principle Ahimsa which runs through the Jain tradition like a golden thread "Ahimsa Parmo Dharma" (Non-Violence is the supreme religion). Jain teachings of peace, harmony and pronunciation, Ahimsa is a principle that Jains teach and practice not only towards human beings but towards all nature. It is an unequivocal teaching that is at once ancient and contemporary.

The Scriptures tell us :

"All the arhats (venerable ones) of the past, present and future discourse, counsel, prodaim, propound and prescribe thus in unison: Do not injure, abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, torment, torture or kill any creature or living being."

Jain philosophy considers all earth-bodied, water bodied, air bodied, fire bodied, plant bodied and the moveable creatures as a living being and any harm to these is considered as violence. This definition alone has the power to solve most of the problem of violence & consumerism driven economy. Excess utilization of water, food clothes and other resources is considered as causing or including in violence.

- **ParasparopagrahoJivanam(Interdependence) :**

Ecological crisis is a consequence of consumer society in order to perceive the high status and satisfying the limitless wants, man has brutally used the nature assuming his personal property.

Jain philosophy based on non-violence is a vigilant security guard of ecological balance. Don't kill any living beings, don't try to rule them is the core preaching and practice of Mahavira. He believes in the virtue of fearlessness.

Jain cosmology recognizes the fundamental natural phenomenon of symbiosis or mutual dependence, which forms the basis modern day science of ecology. ParasparopagrahoJivanan (All life is bound together by mutual support and Interdependence) is refreshingly contemporary in its premise and perspective. It defines the scope of modern ecology while extending it further to a more spacious 'home'. It means that all aspects of nature belong together and are bound in a physical as well as a metaphysical relationship. Life is viewed as a gift of togetherness, accommodation and assistanceIn a universe teeming with interdependent constituents.

- **Anekantavada (The doctrine of manifold aspects)**

The concept of universal interdependence underpins the jain theory of knowledge knows as Anekantavada or the doctrine of manifold aspects Anekantavada describes the world as a multifaceted, ever-changing reality with an infinity of viewpoints depending on the time, place, nature and state of the one who is the viewer and that which is viewed.

Because it is rooted in the doctrines of Anekantavada and Syadvada, Jainism does not look upon the universe from the anthropocentric, ethnocentric or ecocentric viewpoints of other species, other communities and nations and other human beings.

- **Samyaktva (Equanimity)**

The discipline of non-violence, the recognition of universalinterdependence and the logic of the doctrine of manifold aspects, leads inexorably to the avoidance of dogmatic, intolerant, inflexible, aggressive, harmful and unilateral attitudes towards the world around. It inspires the personal quest of every jain for samyaktva (equanimity) towards both Jiva (animal beings) and Ajiva (inanimate) substances and (objects). It encourages an attitude of give and take and of live and let live. It offers a pragmatic peace plan based, not on the domination of nature, nations or other people, but on an equanimity of mind devoted to the preservation of the balance of the universe.

- **JivaDaya (Compassion, Empathy and Charity)**

Jiva-daya means caring for and sharing with all living beings, tending, protecting and serving them. It etrails universal friendliness (Maitri), universal forgiveness (kshama) and universal fearlessness (abhaya).

Jains, whether monks, ariyka or householders, affirm prayerfully and sincerely that their heart is filled with forgiveness for all living beings and that they have sought and received the forgiveness of all beings, that all beings give them their friendship and that there is not the slightest feeling of alienation or enmity in their heart for anyone or anything. They also pray that forgiveness and friendliness may reign throughout the world and that all living beings may cherish each other.

II. CONCLUSION

The five fundamental teachings of Jainism and the fivefoldjain code of conduct are deeply rooted in its living ethos in unbroken continuity across the centuries. They offer the world today a time-tested anchor of moral imperatives and a viable route plan for humanity's common pilgrimage for holistic environmental protection, peace and harmony in the universe.

The most prosperous nations in the world are not necessarily those with a high GDP but those with happy, healthy and free citizens. In dealing with the basic problems of sustainable development and establishing the peaceful society of equality, the jain way of life is a unique code of ethical-scientific virtues in the frame of universal and individual responsibility. The most important aspects of its application is that it can be practiced by persons of any religion without deviating from their religious practises. Jain way of lifestyle having non-violence, no possession & non-absolutism with flexible application as per the time, place and circumstances is an effective approach to steer sustainable development.

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