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Anuvrata: Voice Of Existence Of Jain Lay People.

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Abstract:

According to the Tirthankaras, every living thing has a soul (Jiva), and each one is involved in a seemingly infinite cycle of reincarnation. The ultimate goal of Jainism is to achieve Moksha (freedom), which entails releasing the soul from this cycle of rebirth. Anuvrata, which is the voice of the lay people, followed in order to break the cycle of birth and death and to become the ideal Shravak or Shravika (lay people).

Lay people (Shravak /Shravika), who are in household life, follow Anuvrata, whereas Sadhu and Sadhvi, who have given up household life, strictly adhere to Mahavrata throughout their lives. However, since householders are unable to adhere to Mahavrata completely, these Mahavratas are followed in the form of Anuvrata. Satya, Ahimsa, Acharya, Aparigraha, and Brahmacharya are the five fundamental vows. In the research paper, the researcher explains Anuvrata existence, applicability, and significance.

Keywords: Anuvrata; lay People, Jain, Movement Vows.

Objectives:

1. To highlight the Anuvrata in Jainism and its importance.
2. To accentuate the relevancy of Anuvrata in Present times.
3. To highlight the Anuvrata Movement established by Acharya Tulsi.

Study Area and Methodology:

Researcher did literary research to know about Anuvrata and also did survey of 30Swetambar Lay people of Ratlam Region of Madhya Pradesh by applying questionnaire methodology. Besides this, researcher visit libraries to complete literary work of research:

1. Acharya Shri Ganesh Laal Library, Ratlam
2. Jain Jagrati library, Ratlam.
3. Jain Vishwa Bharati, e- Library and Jain e-library

I. Introduction:

Many different ideologies and religions have sprung from Indian civilization. One of the oldest religions in the world is Jainism, which is among them. Jainism is a religion, a philosophy, and a way of life that has been taught and practised throughout history by many Jinas (and will continue to be taught by Jinas in the future). The history of Jainism's origins is still a mystery, despite the many conjectures made by historians. Jains consider it to be a timeless faith. In the traditional Indian language Sanskrit, the word Jina, which means "victory," is the root of the name Jainism. With their own effort, Jina has gained the true qualities of the soul, such as infinite trust, infinite knowledge, faultless conduct, infinite happiness, and eternity. They have also freed themselves from karmic bonds and won the battle over themselves. They are known as Tirthankaras, those who guide us towards the path of perfect, eternal life. Tirth is the Sanskrit word for the spiritual path or the order that travels along it. Chaturvidh society (Chaturvidh Sangh), consisting of male renouncers (Sadhus), female renouncers (Sadhvis), male lay followers (Sravakas), and female lay followers (Sravikas), is established by each Tirthankar. (Shastri, 2007)

The Tirthankar preaches the truth about the nature of the universe, the purpose of existence, and the ethical path that should be followed, guiding the aforementioned four orders of society towards the road of spiritual perfection. The phrase "religion preached by the Jinas" refers to Jainism as expressing the timeless spiritual and life lessons imparted by pure souls who have conquered their own selves and possess flawless knowledge and understanding.

According to Jainism, although the cosmos and all of its elements, including living and non-living entities, might alter their physical forms, they are fundamentally eternal. Time moves in cycles, lowering and climbing like a wheel turning in a clockwise direction. Twenty-four Tirthankaras construct the four-fold order and impart the way of bliss and perfection to all living things throughout the globe in each half of the time cycle (aeon), descending and ascending. According to commonly accepted dates, Rishabdev was the first and Vardhaman Mahavira was the twenty-fourth (and final) Tirthankar in this aeon, who lived between 599 and 527 BCE. (Shastri, 2007)

Renouncers are very keen about the uplift of their souls and hence they sacrifice all worldly enjoyments, family relationships, and adopt the five great vows (Maha-Vratas). For those who want to remain in family life and for whom complete avoidance of five principle sins are difficult, Jain ethics specifies the following twelve vows to be carried out by the householder. Out of these twelve vows, the first five are main vows of limited nature (Anuvrata). They are somewhat easier in comparison with great vows (Mahavratas) (Jainworld).

II. Elucidation of Prominent Anuvrata:

- **Ahimsa Anuvrata: (Non-violence-limited vow):**

According to this vow, a person shall not knowingly cause harm to any living thing (plants, animals, people, etc.) or their feelings, either directly or indirectly through others, or by condoning an act of harm that has already been committed. In this situation, intentionality encompasses selfish motives, pure enjoyment, and even avoidable neglect. He has the right to use force if it's essential to protect his nation, society, family, people, possessions, or religious organisation. His agricultural, industrial, and occupational living activities also result in life-related injuries, but they should be kept to a minimum via caution and due diligence.

According to Jain Aagam, there are four different types of violence:

- a. **Premeditated Violence:** Violence committed with the intent to harm someone
- b. **Defensive violence** is the purposeful use of force to protect oneself.
- c. **Violence committed for a living:** Using violence to achieve one's livelihood.
- d. **Common Violence:** Using violence while going about one's normal business.

All forms of premeditated violence are forbidden. A householder is allowed to use violence defensively and for work as long as he retains total objectivity. Common violence is permitted here because it is necessary for survival, yet even here, one should exercise caution when cooking, cleaning, etc. This outlines the Jain customs of water filtration, vegetarianism, skipping meals at night, and alcohol abstinence. Jain principles rely on nonviolence.

- **Satya Anuvrata: (limited vow of truthfulness)**

Truth is the second of the five prominent Anuvrata vows. It involves more than just refraining from lying. It does this by taking the world as it is and adjusting to it. The vow of truth helps a person connect with their inner power and potential.

In keeping with this commitment, the person promises not to tell lies, such as by offering false testimony or disputing ownership of someone else's property that has been entrusted to him. The pledge must be upheld in word, deed, and thinking, whether the person carries it out directly or indirectly through others. If telling the truth affects someone else or their feelings, he shouldn't say it. He ought to remain silent in this situation.

- **Acharya/Asetya Anuvrata (Limited vow against theft):**

This vow forbids robbing or taking someone else's possessions. He must also avoid deceit and the use of illicit methods when acquiring material goods, as well as using intermediaries or approving similar behaviour on the part of others.

- **Brahmacharya (Chastity Limited Vow):**

The main goals of the chastity Limited vow (Brahmacharya Anuvrata) are to control passion and minimise energy waste. The pledge, when positively proclaimed, aims to instil a sense of tranquility in the soul. This vow forbids the householder from engaging in sexual contact with anyone other than their own legally

married spouse. Excessive indulgence in all forms of sexual pleasure must be avoided, even with one's own spouse.

- **Non-possession/Non-attachment Limited Vow (Aparigraha Anuvrata):**

The Fifth restricted vow is non-possession. A person will continue to try to fill their empty and insecure existence with the clutter of material possessions as long as they are unaware of the richness of joy and serenity that comes from inside.

A limit must be set for one's requirements, purchases, and belongings, including those related to goods, other assets, pets, money, real estate, and so forth. The surplus should be put to good use for everyone. Additionally, the quantity and variety of food items or other items used on a daily basis must be restricted. The Jain principle of restricted possession for householders promotes fair wealth, comfort, and other social distributions. Jainism therefore contributes to the development of socialism, economic stability, and welfare throughout the world. The absence of possessions, like the absence of violence, acknowledges the interconnectedness of all life and helps both the individual's spiritual development and the equitable distribution of wealth in society. (Pravin.K.Shah, 2014), (NirmalaJain, 2016)

III. Anuvrata Movement by Acharya Tulsi:

The Anuvrata Movement is essentially a large-scale campaign to promote a modest way of living based on self-control. It supports medical professionals by raising public awareness of the dangers of living a life without boundaries and serving as a warning to the public. It is a moral code of conduct that demands self-control from people in all facets of life. In essence, it makes the point that our lack of self-control is what mostly causes our misery.

A long time ago, Jain leader Acharya Tulsi (1914–1977) realised that regardless of one's faith—Jain, Hindu, Muslim, or Christian—a person's general tendency is to follow a pledge they have made despite difficult circumstances. Even medical professionals observe vows in their private lives for their own well-being and personal development.

Disturbed by the rising trend among people to adopt a pretentious and ostentatious lifestyle, Acharya ji made the decision to take action by attempting to eradicate the unethical attitudes that contribute to an unhealthy society. He thus started the Anuvrata Movement in 1949. A vast cast of honourable national leaders, including; Pt. Jawahar Laal Nehru, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and Laal Bahadur Shastri, spontaneously supported it. (S.L.Gandhi, 2021)

IV. Anuvrata Movement Objectives:

1. I won't kill any innocent creatures, including myself or others. This includes neither suicide nor feticide.
2. I won't harass anyone
3. I'm against supporting violence.
4. I'll make an effort to promote world peace and disarmament.
5. I promise not to engage in any harmful or violent agitation.
6. I'll trust in the shared humanity.
7. I won't treat somebody as an untouchable or discriminate against them based on their caste, colour, or anything else.
8. I'll be tolerant of all religions.
9. I won't incite sectarian fervour
10. I'll act honourably in all of my interactions with other individuals.
11. I won't hurt anyone to get any goals.
12. I won't engage in dishonesty. (S.L.Gandhi, 2021), (Jainsamaj.org)

V. Analysis of Questionnaire Survey of the Lay People:

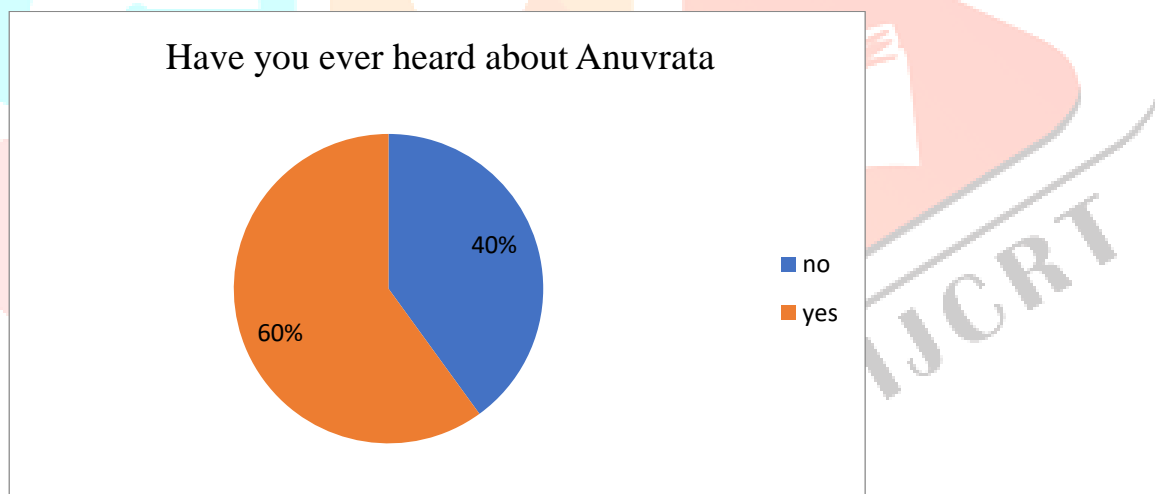


Figure1: Have the Lay people ever heard about Anuvrata.

Figure 1 clearly indicates that most of the people had heard about Anuvrata, it means they possess basic knowledge of Jainism and religious duties as householders.

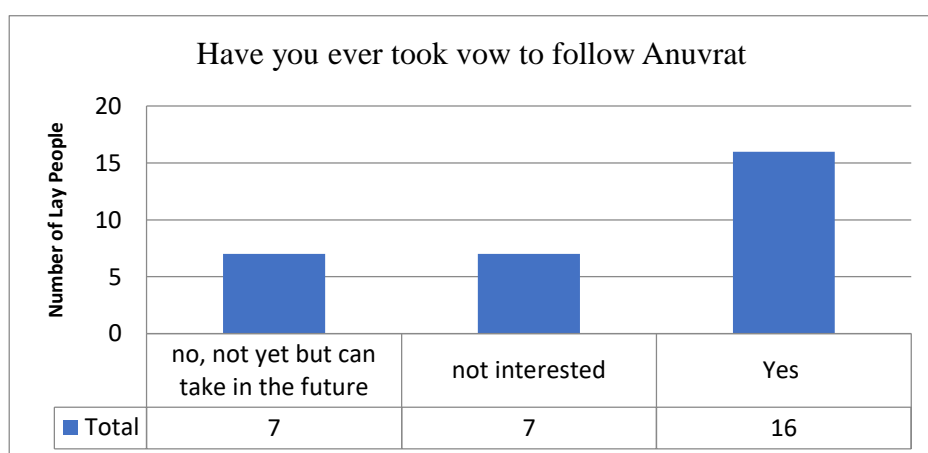


Figure2: Have the Lay People ever took Vow to follow Anuvrata.

Figure2: Described that most of (16 out of 30) the lay people had taken the Vow to follow Anuvrata and 7 people want to take in the future.

VI. Conclusion:

A lay follower may live an unblemished life, progress towards a fuller and more ideal existence, and subdue desire by engaging in these Anuvrata. He learns self-control, love, and hostility while working hard to accumulate money, provide for his family, and take up arms to defend himself, his family, and his country against invaders. On the one hand, his reckless actions save him from causing any harm to himself, his family, his country, or humanity. On the other hand, by letting go of attachments, he progressively gets ready for an ascetic lifestyle.

If one digs deeper into the regulations established, he or she will discover that the practise of restricting the amount of possessions each person keeps or enjoys for themselves removes the risk of a concentration of riches at one location, which will help to lessen poverty and crime in society. A society where individual desires are constrained is ideal. It clears from the Survey that most of the people of Ratlam region are aware about their duties as householders in the form of the Anuvrata and they also took vows and follow them since long times with equanimity.

Our own thoughts determine whether we are good or bad. Since negativity is prevalent in today's world, it is necessary to read excellent literature, learn from gurus, and surround ourselves with positive people in order to change our negative thoughts into positive ones. When the notion of adhering to Anuvrata first occurred, nurture it until it became a habit, and when it became a way of life, we would not even be aware of ourselves and would be true adherents of the non-violent religion.

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