

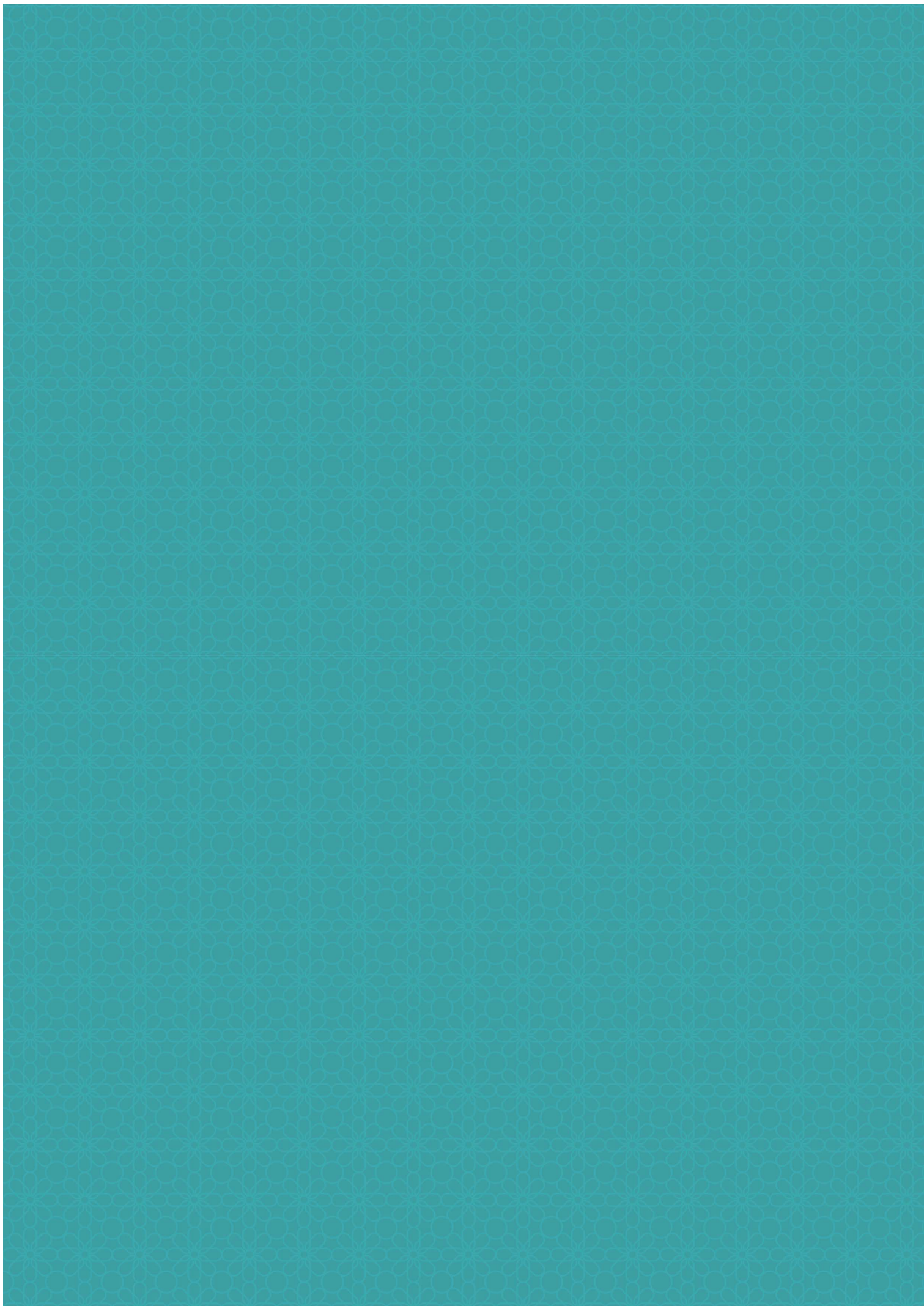


Compendium

Seminar on the Contribution of Jain Community to the Indian Economy, Education and Philanthropy

23th April, 2026 | Indore, Madhya Pradesh





Preface

India's civilizational ethos is deeply enriched by the contributions of diverse communities that have collectively shaped its economic, cultural, intellectual, and moral foundations. Among these, the Jain community occupies a distinctive place. Though small in demographic size, the community has made a disproportionately large contribution to the nation's growth through enterprise, philanthropy, education, ethical business practices, and value-based living.

The National Seminar on "The Contribution of the Jain Community to the Indian Economy, Education and Philanthropy", organised by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) in collaboration with Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV), Indore, sought to deliberate upon and document these multidimensional contributions. Held on 23 April 2026 at The Marriott, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, the seminar brought together eminent scholars, policymakers, philanthropists, industrialists, educationists, and community representatives from across the country.

The seminar explored the contribution of Jainism and the Jain community through a historical and contemporary lens, spanning economic development, entrepreneurship, philanthropy, education, ethical governance, animal welfare, sustainability, and the Indian Knowledge System. The deliberations highlighted how Jain principles such as Ahimsa (non-violence), Aparigraha (non-possession), and Anekantavada (multiplicity of viewpoints) remain profoundly relevant in addressing contemporary societal and developmental challenges.

This compendium documents the proceedings, deliberations, insights, and key outcomes of the seminar. It aims not only to preserve the knowledge shared during the event but also to inspire further research, dialogue, and policy engagement on the role of minority communities in India's national development journey.



ABOUT THE SEMINAR

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) organised a National Seminar on “The Contribution of the Jain Community to the Indian Economy, Education and Philanthropy” on 23 April 2026 at The Marriott, Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya (DAVV), Indore, was the knowledge partner of the commission.

The seminar aimed to explore, discuss, and promote awareness regarding the historical and contemporary contribution of Jainism—one of India’s most ancient spiritual traditions—to various sectors including economy, education, philanthropy, and the Indian Knowledge System. The discussions traversed a broad historical spectrum, from ancient times to the present, reflecting upon the enduring influence of Jain values and institutions in shaping society.

The seminar was structured into four sessions:

1. Inaugural Session
2. Technical Session I: *Contribution of the Jain Community to the Indian Economy, Education and Philanthropy*
3. Technical Session II: *Jainism and Indian Knowledge System*
4. Valedictory Session

The event witnessed participation from nearly 400 attendees representing various sections of society, including members of the Jain community, scholars, teachers, students, entrepreneurs, industrialists, philanthropists, professionals, policymakers, and members of different communities.

Through rich discussions and scholarly engagement, the seminar generated valuable insights into the role of the Jain community in nation-building, humanitarian service, environmental conservation, entrepreneurship, and value-based social transformation. A recurring theme that emerged throughout the deliberations was that the Jain community, though small in number, has had an immense and lasting impact on India’s social, economic, and moral landscape.

The seminar further highlighted that the Jain tradition extends beyond religious identity and represents a value-based way of life rooted in ethics, discipline, compassion, sustainability, and service to humanity.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The National Seminar commenced with a grand inaugural session at The Marriott, Indore, in the distinguished presence of eminent dignitaries, policymakers, scholars, philanthropists, and members of civil society. The inaugural proceedings set the tone for the day's deliberations by foregrounding the remarkable contribution of the Jain community to nation-building and social development.



The programme began with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, symbolising the dispelling of ignorance through knowledge, followed by a devotional Mangalacharan and the recitation of the Navkar Mahamantra. The solemn invocation created an atmosphere of serenity and spiritual reflection, aligning with the philosophical foundations of Jainism. Thereafter, distinguished guests were felicitated.

Across the inaugural deliberations, speakers unanimously acknowledged that despite constituting less than one percent of India's population, the Jain community has made profound contributions to the nation's economic progress, educational advancement, philanthropy, ethical business practices, and social welfare.

Welcome Address by Smt. Alka Upadhyaya



Welcoming the dignitaries and participants, Smt. Alka Upadhyaya described the Jain community as a living embodiment of social harmony, ethical conduct, and moral values. She noted that the community has made remarkable contributions to education, commerce, and charitable activities across India, particularly in Madhya Pradesh. She highlighted that institutions established and managed by members of the Jain community—including schools, hospitals, hostels, charitable trusts, animal welfare initiatives, scholarship programmes, and annadaan (free food distribution)—serve as exemplary models of social responsibility and collective welfare. Such initiatives, she observed, offer valuable inspiration to other sections of society. She also elaborated upon the role and mandate of the National Commission for Minorities and referred to various government initiatives and schemes designed to promote educational empowerment, welfare, and inclusive development among minority communities.

**- Smt. Alka Upadhyaya,
Secretary, National Commission
for Minorities (NCM)**



Address by the Vice Chancellor, DAVV

Dr. Rakesh Singhai highlighted the remarkable contribution of the Jain community to education and national development. He observed that despite constituting less than one percent of India's population, the community contributes significantly to the nation's economic activity, including income tax collection and GDP generation.

Drawing attention to social indicators, he noted that the literacy rate among Jain women exceeds ninety percent, reflecting the community's enduring commitment to education and empowerment.

He emphasized that the core principles of Jain philosophy—particularly Ahimsa (non-violence) and the teachings of Lord Mahavira—provide an ethical foundation for both economic success and responsible citizenship. Jain entrepreneurs, he remarked, have not merely generated wealth but have also contributed substantially to employment creation and human capital development.

Dr. Singhai further underscored the need for sustained research into value-based practices within Jainism, observing that these traditions hold enduring relevance in addressing contemporary societal and developmental challenges.



-Dr. Rakesh Singhai
Vice-Chancellor, Devi Ahilya
Vishwavidyalaya, Indore

Keynote Address by Shri Shantilal Mutha

Shri Shantilal Mutha emphasized that strong foundations are indispensable for lasting progress, remarking that “if the foundation is strong, the structure will also be strong.” Reflecting upon the Jain community’s contribution to education, water conservation, and nation-building, he stressed that policy formulation alone is insufficient unless accompanied by effective implementation.

He elaborated upon Moolyavardhan, a value-based educational programme developed by the Shantilal Mutha Foundation for students from Classes I to VIII. Aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) and curricular frameworks, the programme seeks to nurture ethics, life skills, and value-oriented education not merely for the Jain community but for society at large. Developed through extensive research integrating Indian and international educational practices, the programme has reportedly been adopted by the Government of Maharashtra in nearly one lakh schools, benefiting approximately ten million students. He further noted that expansion efforts are underway in Maharashtra and Goa, while a proposal has also been submitted for implementation in Madhya Pradesh.

*- Shri Shantilal Mutha
Philanthropist and Founder,
Shantilal Mutha Foundation*



Address by Shri Kamlesh Sojatia



Shri Kamlesh Sojatia highlighted the extensive contribution of the Jain International Trade Organization (JITO) in promoting entrepreneurship, education, healthcare, and social welfare. He noted that JITO connects nearly 70,000 families through over 120 chapters in India and 35 abroad. Through JITO Education and Development, the organisation supports education for nearly five lakh children annually and has disbursed around ₹200 crore in educational loans. He also highlighted healthcare initiatives benefiting 25,000 individuals and investments of nearly ₹1,000 crore in startups, emphasizing JITO's commitment to service and nation-building.

- Shri Kamlesh Sojatia
Vice President,
Jain International Trade
Organization (JITO)



Address by Shri Berjis Desai



Shri Berjis Desai, Member, National Commission for Minorities, reflected upon his long-standing personal association with the Jain community, sharing that despite belonging to the Parsi community, he has remained closely connected with Jain traditions and philosophy for over twenty-five years.

He highlighted the unique balance that Jainism maintains between spirituality and ethical conduct, observing that its teachings seamlessly integrate inner discipline with compassionate social action. He particularly appreciated the Jain community's commitment to compassion and animal welfare, referring to initiatives such as prosthetic support for injured cattle, bird hospital and broader welfare measures for animals.

Shri Desai remarked that charity in Jain philosophy transcends material giving and is deeply rooted in faith, compassion, restraint, and moral responsibility. In this sense, he observed, philanthropy within the Jain tradition represents not merely financial assistance but a holistic ethical commitment toward all living beings.

- Shri Berjis Desai
Member, National Commission
for Minorities



Address by Smt. Munawari Begum



Smt. Munawari Begum, Member, National Commission for Minorities, expressed her pleasure in participating in the National Seminar and interacting with members of the Jain community in Indore. Referring to the legacy of Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar, she observed that the region carries a distinguished tradition of education, service, and social welfare, making it an appropriate setting for deliberations on the contributions of the Jain community. Drawing from her experiences in Tamil Nadu, particularly in the Krishnagiri district, she highlighted the active role played by Jain institutions in promoting education and community welfare. She referred to the construction of a grand Padmavati Temple in the region and noted that several educational institutions managed by members of the Jain community continue to serve society through inclusive and value-based education.

Sharing reflections from her native place in Tamil Nadu, Smt. Begum acknowledged the Jain community's longstanding contributions to social welfare and community development initiatives. She emphasized that institutions established and supported by the Jain community transcend religious boundaries and are marked by inclusivity, serving people across communities without discrimination.

- Smt. Munawari Begum
Member, National Commission
for Minorities



Address by Shri Chaitanya Kashyap



Shri Chaitanya Kashyap, Hon'ble Minister of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Government of Madhya Pradesh, observed that the strength of a community should not be measured merely by its numerical size but by the values it upholds, the contributions it makes and the impact it creates in society. Referring to the Jain community, he stated that despite being small in number, it has made an extraordinary contribution to India's economic, social and cultural development through enterprise, philanthropy, ethical conduct and nation-building.

He emphasized that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, focused efforts are being undertaken to empower minority communities and recognize their role in strengthening India's inclusive development. He noted that the contribution of the Jain community has received due recognition for its commitment to social welfare, education, entrepreneurship and economic growth.

**- Shri Chaitanya Kashyap
Hon'ble Minister of Micro,
Small & Medium Enterprises,
Government of Madhya Pradesh**



Address by Shri George Kurian



Shri George Kurian, Hon'ble Minister of State for Minority Affairs and Chief Guest on the occasion, reflected upon his evolving understanding of the Jain community. He shared that while he had initially associated the community primarily with non-violence and philanthropy, deeper engagement led him to appreciate the extensive and multidimensional contributions made by the community to Indian society. He observed that the Jain community ranks among the foremost contributors to charitable causes in India.

Highlighting the Government's commitment to minority welfare and cultural preservation, Shri Kurian referred to several initiatives undertaken in support of minority communities. These included the recognition of Prakrit as a classical language, the establishment of a Centre for Digitization of Jain Manuscripts at Gujarat University, and the setting up of a Minority Studies Centre at Mumbai University.

He also elaborated upon flagship schemes of the Ministry of Minority Affairs, including the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), which supports infrastructure development in education and healthcare, and PM VIKAS, which provides free skill training in emerging technologies, including the Internet of Things (IoT). He emphasized that the objective of these initiatives extends beyond welfare assistance and seeks to empower minority communities through education, skill development, and self-reliance.

**- Shri George Kurian
Hon'ble Minister of State
for Minority Affairs,
Government of India**



Address by Shri Kiren Rijju



Addressing the gathering through a video message, Shri Kiren Rijju, Hon'ble Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs, described philanthropy as one of the defining characteristics of Jain society. He noted that Jain institutions, including hospitals, dharamshalas, gaushalas and community kitchens, serve people with dignity and compassion, reflecting the community's deep commitment to humanitarian service.

The Union Minister observed that Jain entrepreneurs continue to play a vital role in powering India's economy by generating employment, driving innovation, and contributing to sectors such as education, healthcare and rural development. He stated that the Jain community remains an important partner in advancing the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 envisioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Acknowledging the Government's recognition of the community's contributions, Shri Rijju highlighted initiatives such as PM VIKAS and the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram, through which efforts are being made to empower Jain youth and institutions. He further remarked that the enduring principles of Jain philosophy like Ahimsa (non-violence), Aparigraha (non-possession) and Anekantavada (plurality of viewpoints), etc. offer valuable lessons in harmony, sustainability and respect for diversity, values that are increasingly important in contemporary society.

- Shri Kiren Rijju
Hon'ble Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and
Minority Affairs, Government of India

Vote of Thanks by Dr. Atya Nand



Dr. Atya Nand, Joint Secretary, National Commission for Minorities, delivered the vote of thanks and conveyed heartfelt appreciation to the dignitaries, distinguished speakers, scholars, representatives of the Jain community, delegates and participants for their gracious presence and insightful contributions to the seminar. He acknowledged the collective efforts of all stakeholders whose participation enriched the deliberations and contributed to the success of the programme.

Emphasizing the importance of continued dialogue and collaborative engagement, he expressed hope that the deliberations and recommendations emerging from the seminar would contribute meaningfully towards policy formulation, preservation of heritage and greater awareness of the Jain community's enduring contribution to nation-building.

- Dr. Atya Nand
Joint Secretary, National
Commission for
Minorities



Technical Session – I

Contribution of the Jain Community to the Indian Economy, Education and Philanthropy

The first technical session examined the historical and contemporary contribution of the Jain community to India's economic development, educational advancement and philanthropic traditions. Eminent scholars, industry leaders and social thinkers reflected upon the role of Jain values in shaping ethical entrepreneurship, humanitarian service, knowledge preservation and sustainable living. The session underscored how a relatively small community has made a disproportionate contribution to national development through commerce, social institutions, education, disaster relief and value-based leadership.

The session was moderated by **Prof. Rajnish Jain, Director, Centre for Jain Studies, DAVV, Indore.**



Opening Remarks by Prof. Rajnish Jain- Moderator



Prof. Rajnish Jain observed that the contribution of the Jain community extends back thousands of years and can be traced to Lord Rishabhdev (Adinath), the first Tirthankara, who introduced foundational systems of governance, education, agriculture, commerce and crafts to human society. He noted that the Jain community has historically contributed to trade, education, management and social organization while continuing to shape modern economic and industrial growth. Emphasizing the relevance of Aparigraha (non-possession), he described it as a guiding principle for sustainable and ethical living. He further highlighted vegetarianism as one of Jainism's most significant contributions, observing that "Jain food" today has emerged globally as a recognized identity associated with purity and ethical consumption.

**- Prof. Rajnish Jain
Director, Centre for
Jain Studies, DAVV, Indore**



Address by Shri Shantilal Mutha, Speaker



Shri Shantilal Mutha emphasized that Jain contributions to nation-building have historically been guided by values of service, discipline and moral responsibility inspired by Jain Acharyas and saints. Reflecting on humanitarian interventions during the 1993 Latur earthquake, he recalled organising food relief for nearly 10,000 people daily and later establishing a residential school for approximately 1,200 orphaned children. He highlighted similar efforts during the Gujarat earthquake, the COVID-19 pandemic and in disaster-hit regions such as Jammu & Kashmir, Nepal and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. He also referred to the disaster management model developed by Bharatiya Jain Sangathan, emphasizing coordinated action among government, media and civil society for effective crisis response.

- Shri Shantilal Mutha
Founder, Shantilal Mutha Foundation,
Pune



Address by Shri Rajneesh Jain, Speaker



Shri Rajneesh Jain stated that the Jain community's contribution extends beyond wealth creation to strengthening India's social, moral and economic fabric. He emphasized that Jain entrepreneurship is rooted in trust, ethics, transparency and reliability rather than profit alone. Highlighting contributions across manufacturing, trade, financial services, logistics, pharmaceuticals, textiles and infrastructure, he noted that Jain enterprises have significantly generated employment and economic growth. At the same time, Jain institutions continue to support hospitals, schools, hostels and charitable trusts across thousands of villages. Referring to disaster rehabilitation efforts in Gujarat and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, he remarked that service remains central to Jain philosophy, guided by the enduring principle: "Lead by giving."

- Shri Rajneesh Jain
Vice Chairman (Minority Wing),
JITO



Address by Dr. Jitendra Bhai Shah, Speaker



Dr. Jitendra Bhai Shah emphasized that the Jain community has contributed not only economically but also intellectually and morally to nation-building. Drawing upon Jain philosophy, he observed that reflection and ethical thought are essential for distinguishing beneficial action from harmful conduct. He recalled how, during the India–China conflict, the Jain community contributed resources from religious trusts to support national interests. Highlighting Jainism’s role in preserving knowledge, he referred to Ashtalaksharthi, documenting eight lakh interpretations by scholar Samaysundar Ji and the preservation of the Buddhist text Pramanavartikalankar in Jain repositories. He observed that India’s vast manuscript heritage continues to be significantly safeguarded through Jain collections.

- Dr. Jitendra Bhai Shah
Former Director, L.D. Institute
of Indology, Ahmedabad



Address by Dr. Ashok Badjatiya, Speaker



Dr. Ashok Badjatiya stated that service in Jainism is inseparable from its philosophical foundations, with values of charity, discipline and restraint cultivated from childhood. He explained that Jain teachings encourage social participation, often through practices such as saving for charitable purposes from an early age. Referring to Aparigraha (non-possession), he noted its relevance to modern sustainability through responsible use of resources. Drawing parallels with Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Trusteeship, he emphasized that wealth should benefit society rather than remain confined to personal use. He highlighted Jain contributions in healthcare, education, water conservation, women's empowerment, cow protection and rural development focused on dignity and self-reliance.

- Dr. Ashok Badjatiya
National President, Digamber
Jain Mahasamiti



Address by Shri Girish J. Shah, Speaker



Shri Girish J. Shah highlighted the Jain community's longstanding commitment to animal welfare and environmental stewardship. He noted that India has over 17,000 registered gaushalas, with estimates rising to nearly 35,000 including unregistered institutions. Describing gaushalas as centres of animal care, rural economy and ecological balance, he stressed the need for improved management, sustainable financing and professional operations. He also raised concerns regarding the complexity of Goods and Services Tax (GST) compliance, particularly for small traders who often face procedural difficulties and lack clarity in implementation. He called for practical reforms to ease operational challenges for smaller enterprises.

*- Shri Girish J. Shah
Member, Animal Welfare
Board of India*



Moderator's Concluding Remarks

Concluding the session, Prof. Rajnish Jain observed that the discussions demonstrated how the Jain community has consistently balanced economic advancement with ethics, education and humanitarian service. He remarked that from ancient traditions to modern entrepreneurship, Jain contributions continue to reinforce the importance of trust, compassion, sustainability and value-based development in nation-building.



Technical Session – II

Jainism and Indian Knowledge System

The second technical session on “Jainism and Indian Knowledge System” explored the profound intellectual, philosophical, scientific, and cultural contributions of Jainism to India’s civilizational heritage. The session highlighted the role of Jain philosophy and scholarship in shaping diverse domains of knowledge including logic, mathematics, language, literature, ethics, medicine, astronomy, architecture, and environmental thought. Discussions emphasized that Jainism, rooted in the Shramana tradition, offers a holistic framework based on non-violence, pluralism, ethical conduct, and spiritual inquiry. Speakers reflected upon the enduring relevance of core Jain principles such as Ahimsa, Anekantavada, Aparigraha, and Syadvada in addressing contemporary global concerns related to conflict, intolerance, ecological imbalance, and social justice.

The session was moderated by **Prof. Renu Jain Former Vice Chancellor, DAVV, Indore**



Opening Remarks by Prof. Renu Jain- Moderator



Prof. Renu Jain inaugurated the second technical session by highlighting the Indian Knowledge System as one of the world's oldest, richest and most profound intellectual traditions. She stated that the philosophical foundations of India are rooted in universal ideals such as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Parasparopagraho Jivanām, which promote harmony, coexistence, compassion and collective welfare. She emphasized that India's civilizational heritage encompasses diverse fields including philosophy, literature, mathematics, astronomy, Ayurveda, yoga, architecture, fine arts and environmental sciences.

Prof. Jain observed that ancient India emerged as a global centre of learning through institutions such as Takshashila, Nalanda and Vikramshila. She particularly underlined the remarkable contribution of Jain acharyas in disciplines like logic, mathematics, alchemy, metallurgy, medicine, astronomy and linguistics. Referring to Acharya Kumudendu's Siri Bhuvaaalaya, she described it as a pioneering knowledge text with relevance for cryptography and coding theory. She concluded that Jain principles such as Ahimsa, Anekantavada and Aparigraha remain highly relevant for addressing contemporary global challenges.

- Prof. Renu Jain
Former Vice Chancellor,
DAVV, Indore



Address by Prof. Shalin Jain, Speaker



Prof. Shalin Jain presented an insightful lecture on the intellectual contributions of the renowned Jain monk Yashovijay, who flourished during the Mughal period under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. He explained that Yashovijay played a significant role in strengthening the Navya-Nyaya tradition in Varanasi while actively engaging with scholars from multiple philosophical traditions. He highlighted that the intellectual atmosphere of medieval India was marked by rigorous scholarly exchange and interfaith dialogue.

Prof. Jain emphasized Yashovijay's major contribution in refining and defending the Jain doctrine of Anekāntavāda. Through the formalization of the Saptabhaṅgī system, Yashovijay developed a sophisticated logical framework capable of addressing critiques from rival schools of thought. He also elaborated on the scholar's engagement with epistemology and spiritual traditions through the Adhyatma movement. According to Prof. Jain, the Jain epistemological tradition reflects the pluralistic spirit of the Indian Knowledge System, encouraging diversity, dialogue, intellectual openness and coexistence instead of rigid unilateralism.

- Prof. Shalin Jain
Department of History, Social
Science Faculty, University of
Delhi



Address by Prof. Bhagchand Jain, Speaker



Prof. Bhagchand Jain delivered a detailed exposition on the historical evolution of Jainism and its extensive literary tradition. Referring to ancient Jain scriptures and archaeological findings, he highlighted the widespread historical influence of Jainism across the Indian subcontinent and beyond. He cited excavations at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka, where Jain statues were discovered deep underground, as evidence of the historical reach of Jain culture and philosophy.

He explained that Jainism traces its origins to Lord Rishabh Dev, regarded as the first Tirthankara in the Jain tradition. He described the Tirthankaras as enlightened spiritual teachers who attained ultimate knowledge through austerity, contemplation and self-discipline. Prof. Jain further elaborated on the teachings of Lord Mahavir, the twenty-fourth Tirthankara, who emphasized liberation through Samyak Darshan, Samyak Gyan and Samyak Charitra. He stressed the ethical relevance of the five principles of Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Aparigraha and Brahmacharya. He concluded by observing that Jainism continues to promote values of vegetarianism, patriotism, moral conduct and spiritual discipline.

**- Prof. Bhagchand Jain
Jain Vishwabharti,
Ladnun, Rajasthan**



Address by Dr. Navin Kumar Shrivastava, Speaker



Dr. Navin Kumar Shrivastava emphasized that Jainism represents one of the most ancient streams of the Shramana tradition rooted in rational perception, ethical conduct and spiritual realization. He explained that Jain philosophy recognizes both permanence and change within reality while affirming the independent existence of the soul and its potential for liberation. This metaphysical framework, according to him, has shaped Jain approaches towards education, ethics, philanthropy and social responsibility.

Dr. Shrivastava highlighted the remarkable contribution of the Jain community to education, healthcare and welfare activities despite its relatively small demographic presence. He noted that Jain educational institutions serve diverse communities and are guided not merely by philanthropy but by deeply rooted ethical principles. Values such as Ahimsa, Anekanta and Aparigraha encourage intellectual openness, moral responsibility, compassion and social harmony within educational practices. He observed that Jain engagement with education reflects a sustained civilizational effort aimed at nurturing knowledge, character formation, ethical consciousness and inclusive social development.

- Dr. Navin Kumar Shrivastava
Associate Director, International
School for Jain Studies, Pune



Address by Prof. Phoolchand Jain, Speaker



Prof. Phoolchand Jain presented a historical overview of Jain literature and its immense contribution to the Indian Knowledge System. He emphasized that Jain acharyas enriched multiple fields of knowledge through literary works composed in Prakrit, Apabhramsha, Sanskrit and regional languages. According to him, Jain scholars played a foundational role in shaping the linguistic and literary heritage of India across centuries.

He particularly highlighted the importance of Prakrit as one of the principal vernacular languages of ancient India. He stated that many Indian languages and literary traditions were deeply influenced by Prakrit and Apabhramsha, which may rightly be regarded as mother languages of several regional linguistic traditions. Prof. Jain also welcomed the Government of India's decision to accord classical language status to Prakrit in October 2024. He observed that this recognition would significantly contribute towards the preservation, promotion and academic study of Prakrit literature. He further noted that Jain literary texts possess immense historical value and can help address gaps, misconceptions and unresolved questions relating to ancient Indian history and culture.

- Prof. Phoolchand Jain
Former HoD, Sampurnanand
Sanskrit University, Varanasi



Address by Dr. Indu Jain, Speaker



Dr. Indu Jain described Jainism not merely as a religion but as a scientific and ethical way of life founded upon non-violence, self-restraint, compassion and moral discipline. She emphasized that the principle of “Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah” conveys a universal message of peace, coexistence and respect for all living beings. She explained that Jain doctrines such as Anekāntavāda and Syādvāda encourage tolerance, humility and openness towards multiple perspectives in society.

She observed that austerity, renunciation, vegetarianism and ethical conduct occupy a central position within Jain philosophy. Dr. Jain also highlighted the contribution of Jain acharyas towards the enrichment of knowledge traditions through literature in Prakrit, Apabhramsha, Sanskrit and other Indian languages. Despite being numerically small, the Jain community has consistently contributed to education, healthcare, trade and philanthropy. She further raised concerns regarding the preservation of Jain literature, pilgrimage centres and cultural heritage. She advocated the establishment of Jain Cultural Centres, Prakrit Academies and dedicated university departments for Prakrit language and Jain philosophy across India.

- Dr. Indu Jain
Founder, Jain Dharma Rakshak
Foundation



Moderator's Concluding Remarks

Concluding the session, Prof. Renu Jain observed that the deliberations provided a comprehensive understanding of the immense contribution of Jain acharyas and scholars to the Indian Knowledge System. She remarked that Jainism has enriched India's intellectual, scientific, philosophical, linguistic and spiritual traditions through its emphasis on knowledge, ethics and human welfare. The discussions demonstrated how Jain scholars contributed significantly to mathematics, logic, literature, linguistics, medicine, astronomy, architecture and social thought.

Prof. Jain further emphasized that the core values of Jain philosophy such as Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Aparigraha and Anekantavada possess enduring relevance in the contemporary world. She stated that these universal principles offer meaningful solutions to present-day global concerns including violence, intolerance, environmental degradation and social conflict. Referring to the rich discussions held during the session, she described the deliberations as highly thought-provoking and intellectually enriching. She concluded by affirming that Jain philosophy represents not only a spiritual path but also a practical framework for peaceful coexistence, ethical living and global harmony.



Valedictory Session

The valedictory session commenced with the presentation of the report of Technical Session I by Prof. Rajnish Jain, Director, Centre for Jain Studies, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, who presented a concise summary of the deliberations and key outcomes of the session.

This was followed by the presentation of the report of Technical Session II by Prof. Renu Jain, former Vice-Chancellor of Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, who provided a comprehensive overview of the major discussions, observations and conclusions that emerged during the session.



Presentation of Report of Technical Session I

The valedictory session commenced with the presentation of the report of Technical Session I by Prof. Rajnish Jain, Director, Centre for Jain Studies, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya. He presented a concise summary of the deliberations, observations and key outcomes that emerged during the session, highlighting important discussions relating to Jain philosophy, heritage and contributions to India's intellectual and socio-cultural traditions.



Presentation of Report of Technical Session II

This was followed by the presentation of the report of Technical Session II by Prof. Renu Jain, former Vice-Chancellor of Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya. She provided a comprehensive overview of the major discussions, observations and conclusions that emerged during the session, with particular emphasis on socio-economic dimensions, community challenges and pathways for future engagement.



Address by Dr. Shrivatsa Krishna



Addressing the gathering, Dr. Shrivatsa Krishna reflected on the contemporary relevance of the subject and its wider implications for India's socio-economic and cultural landscape. He observed that despite constituting less than one per cent of India's total population, the Jain community has made a disproportionately significant contribution to the country's economic development. He noted that the community enjoys a strong presence among India's affluent and entrepreneurial groups and contributes substantially to the nation's economic activity, including the tax base.

Dr. Krishna emphasized that the Jain community represents an important pillar of India's entrepreneurial strength and economic resilience. He remarked that as India advances towards higher levels of economic growth and rising per capita income, the role of the Jain community in contributing to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to become even more significant. Acknowledging certain challenges faced by the community, he stated that the Ministry remains cognizant of these concerns and is committed to meaningful engagement with stakeholders. Referring to his recent interactions, he highlighted the importance of understanding issues concerning the community, particularly in relation to ease of doing business and sustainable enterprise.

- Dr. Shrivatsa Krishna
Secretary, Ministry of
Minority Affairs



Address by Dr. Rakesh Singhai



Subsequently, Dr. Rakesh Singhai highlighted the significance of the programme and underscored the multifaceted contributions of the Jain community. He observed that the Jain tradition holds importance not only from an economic perspective but also from intellectual, philosophical and spiritual standpoints. Referring to the long and rich tradition of religious and philosophical literature, he noted that the wisdom embedded in Jain texts continues to provide moral and ethical guidance to society.

Dr. Singhai also appreciated efforts to reinterpret and disseminate this rich body of knowledge in accessible formats and languages, observing that such initiatives would contribute significantly to preserving cultural heritage and strengthening intergenerational transmission of values.

- Dr. Rakesh Singhai
Vice-Chancellor, Devi Ahilya
Vishwavidyalaya



Closing Remarks by Smt. Alka Upadhyaya



In the concluding phase of the programme, Mrs. Alka Upadhyaya delivered the closing remarks and appreciated the successful organisation of the seminar. Summarising the key discussions and outcomes, she highlighted the globally recognised spirit of service and philanthropy associated with the Jain community.

She observed that both the Jain and Sikh communities possess a distinct global identity and share several common attributes, particularly in their commitment to service, enterprise and social welfare. While the Jain community has historically excelled in trade and commerce, she noted that the Sikh community has made notable contributions to agriculture and increasingly to entrepreneurship and business.

Reflecting on the historical migration of Jain communities from regions such as Rajasthan, Marwar and Gujarat to different parts of the world, including Europe, Canada and the United Kingdom, she observed that members of the community have established themselves through perseverance, hard work and determination. Their experiences, she noted, stand as powerful examples of resilience, enterprise and dedication.

- Smt. Alka Upadhyaya
Secretary, National
Commission for Minorities



Vote of Thanks by Dr. Atya Nand



The valedictory session concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Atya Nand, Joint Secretary, National Commission for Minorities, who conveyed heartfelt appreciation to all distinguished guests, speakers, delegates, scholars and participants for their valuable contributions towards the successful conduct of the seminar. He acknowledged the collective efforts of all stakeholders whose participation enriched the deliberations and contributed to the overall success of the programme.

*- Dr. Atya Nand
Joint Secretary, National
Commission for Minorities*



Key Takeaways

1. Historical Contribution to Civilization and Knowledge Systems

Since ancient times, Jain scholars and the wider Jain community have made significant contributions across diverse fields, including education, literature, philosophy, art, science, architecture, sculpture, trade, commerce, governance and administration. Their intellectual and cultural legacy continues to enrich Indian civilization.

2. Contribution to India's Socio-Economic and Cultural Development

Historical and contemporary evidence demonstrates the Jain community's substantial contribution to India's economic, social and cultural development. Their role extends beyond community boundaries, serving as an integral pillar of the country's economic vitality, ethical traditions and social fabric.

3. Relevance of Jain Philosophy in Contemporary Society

The Jain principles of Ahimsa (non-violence) and Aparigraha (non-possession), along with the foundational tenets of Samyak Darshan (Right Faith), Samyak Gyan (Right Knowledge) and Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct), offer an enduring framework for building a balanced, ethical and value-based society. These principles hold heightened relevance in the contemporary world and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

4. Guidance through Spiritual Leadership

The lives of Jain saints, sadhvis, monks and spiritual preceptors exemplify values of austerity, patience, sacrifice and discipline. Their teachings continue to provide moral guidance and inspiration to the Jain community and society at large.

5. Service to Humanity as a Defining Ethos

Service to humanity remains one of the defining characteristics of the Jain community. This commitment is reflected in the extensive philanthropic and charitable contributions made by individuals, trusts and institutions working towards social welfare, education, healthcare and community upliftment.

6. Importance of Value-Based Socialization

Values cannot be imparted solely through formal education or imposed externally. Rather, they must be nurtured through an enabling ecosystem that cultivates ethical conduct, compassion, discipline and moral responsibility in both thought and action.

7. Wealth Creation with Social Responsibility

Economic prosperity alone is not sufficient; equally important is the responsible utilization of wealth for social welfare and public good. The Jain community has historically embraced philanthropy and charitable giving, thereby strengthening trust and social cohesion across diverse sections of society.

8. Ethics and Transparency in Trade and Commerce

A distinguishing feature of Jain entrepreneurial traditions is that trade and commerce are guided not merely by profit motives but by ethical principles, transparency, trust and social responsibility. These values have contributed significantly to the community's reputation and credibility in business.

9. Jainism as a Value-Based Way of Life

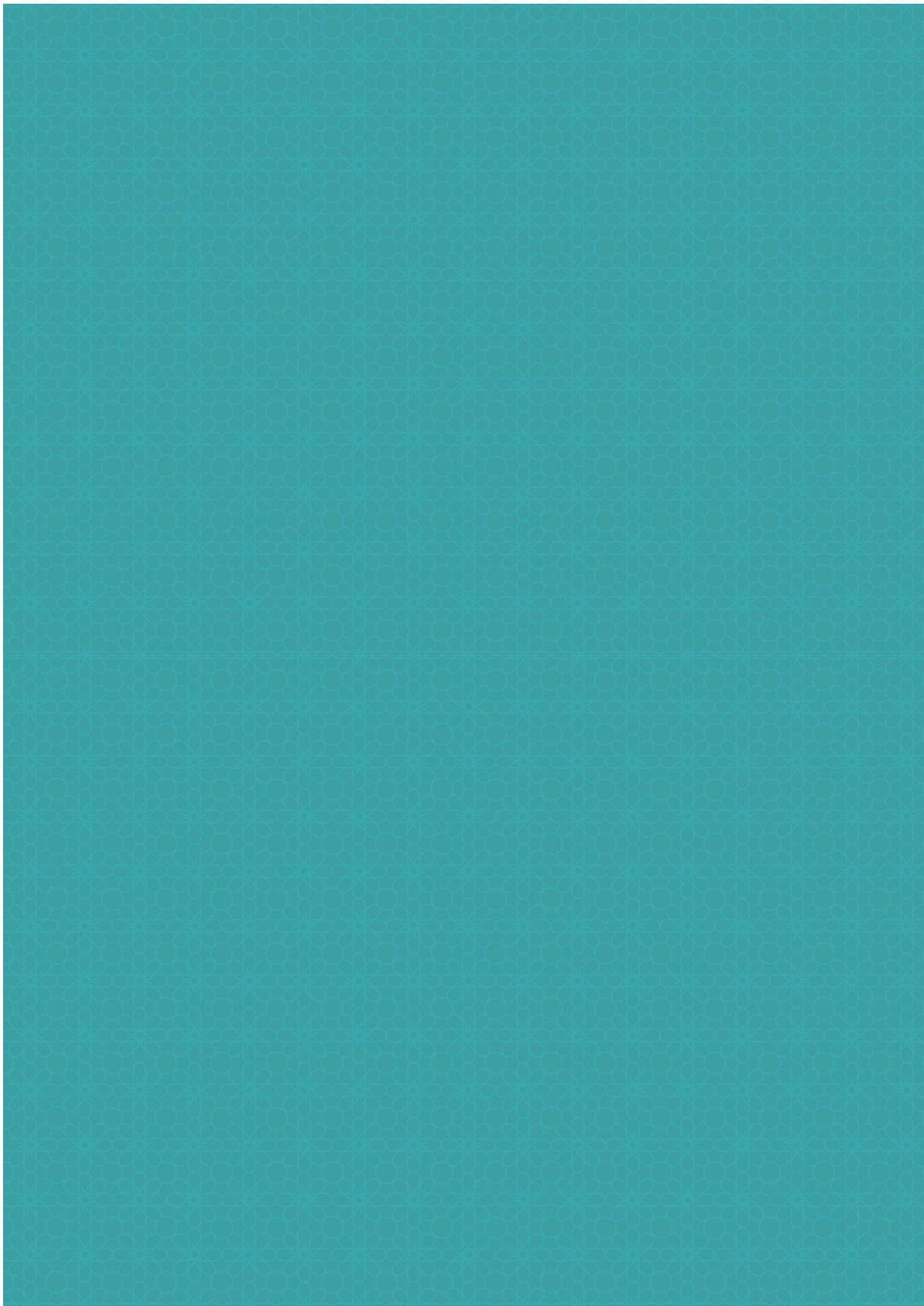
Jainism represents not merely a religion but a holistic and value-oriented way of life. A strong and harmonious society can be built through a balanced integration of education, entrepreneurship, ethical conduct and social service. The Jain community's emphasis on character-building and moral values offers an enduring model for social progress.

10. Balancing Growth with Ethics and Service

Sustainable growth and meaningful development can be achieved only by balancing economic progress with values, ethics, education, enterprise and service to humanity. The Jain community's experience demonstrates the importance of integrating material advancement with moral responsibility.









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